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THE HEAVY LINES SHOW THE COUNTRY MENTIONED IN THE BOOK. THE ISLANDS BROCK, BORDEN, LOUGHEED, AND MEIGHEN WERE DISCOVERED BY STEFANSSON IN 1913–18. HE HAS ALSO MADE MANY JOURNEYS OVER THE SEA ICE NORTH OF ALASKA AND WEST AND NORTH OF THE ISLANDS SHOWN IN HEAVY OUTLINE

NORTHWARD HO!

AN ACCOUNT OF THE FAR NORTH AND ITS PEOPLE

SELECTED FROM THE WRITINGS OF

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

AND ADAPTED FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

BY

JULIA AUGUSTA SCHWARTZ

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CHAPTER I

Yesterday and To-day

AN OLD HUNTER TELLING HIS ADVENTURES FROM A PICTURE RECORD CARVED ON WOOD

CHAPTER I

Yesterday and To-day

For many years after the discovery of America, people thought of the lands and seas of the Far North chiefly as possible way stations and seaways to India. It was with the hope of finding a passage to the East that eager explorers, more than four hundred years ago, began to sail up and down the coast of the new continent. They did not agree with Christopher Columbus, who believed that he had already reached the coast of Asia — a belief to which he clung through the few remaining years of his life. But in the opinion of nearly everybody else, that strange western shore, with its lonely beaches, its sun-dappled woods and quiet meadows, could by no stretch of imagination be regarded as part of the magnificent country of their dreams.

They declared that any sensible person could see that the new land was merely a contemptible desert inhabited by a few savages of no importance. If this, indeed, was India, where were the marvels described by the great traveler, Marco Polo? Where were the splendid cities, the throngs of courtiers, the lakes of pearls, the mountains of gems, the river sands glittering

with gold? Where were the mighty armies, the fleets of laden ships, the precious spices perfuming the air? Of a certainty, none save fools could mistake such a dreary wilderness for the mighty kingdoms of the East. This wretched lump of earth before them was but a barrier that blocked their path to wealth and glory. A pest upon it!

Believing that the next thing to do was to seek out a way around the obstruction, many a crew of adventurers set forth to journey along the immense coast that wanders in countless curves and bends and zigzags almost from pole to pole. Day after day, week after week, month after month, they sailed on and on and on, scanning each inlet, examining every bay and mouth of river, peering from the points of innumerable capes, searching the horizon ceaselessly, in hope of reaching at last the end of this enormous land that held them off from India.

Nearly thirty years after the discovery of the Western Hemisphere, an explorer, named Magellan, succeeded in pushing past the southernmost tip of South America, so winning out into the vast ocean beyond, and thence across the world. In spite of the winds that roar below Cape Horn, this journey could be accomplished much more readily than the journey around the northern shore of North America, since the latter extends far into the frigid zone. Some por-

tions of the coast are likely to be battered during most months of the year by the polar icepack, an immense army of jostling, heaving floes that can crush ships as easily as egg-shells. For this reason, it was not until after nearly four centuries of struggling farther and farther into the unknown North that our arctic coast was at last explored from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

If an artist would draw an animated cartoon to show the progress of exploration in this particular direction, we could sit in a theater and watch a huge map thrown upon the screen. On the broad space of ocean between England and America, a small vessel suddenly glimmers out and comes sailing westward under the command of John Cabot and his son Sebastian. It flutters north as far as Nova Scotia before turning back in discouragement because of the eastward trending shore.

Presently one ship after another, or two and three at a time, appear plunging amid the waves. Several reach Newfoundland and stop. Others steer east of Greenland. Two, under the command of brave John Davis, push into the strait that now bears his name and find whales tumbling in the icy waters.

Then Henry Hudson's bark beats its way to distant Spitsbergen on one trip, on another discovers the Hudson River, and on a third finally creeps into

Hudson Bay. There, fearing starvation, the crew mutinies and sets their captain, with eight companions, adrift in an open boat to perish.

Next, that dipping and dancing little vessel that presses onward three hundred miles beyond Davis Strait is making a record of farthest north for sturdy William Baffin — a record that will stand unbeaten for two full centuries.

Now our animated cartoon is almost quiet for a minute or two, to indicate in movie fashion the passing of many decades in actual history. By and by, upon the land, a few dots crawl through the wilderness west of Hudson Bay and struggle through spruce forests and across intervening patches of open grasslands until, twenty miles beyond the last tree, they come to the shores of the polar sea. These dots are Samuel Hearne and his Indian companions. With gun upon his shoulder, he searches for copper along the banks of the river later known as the Coppermine.

Soon afterward, a glimpse of figures moving northward from Great Slave Lake tells us that Alexander Mackenzie is exploring the mighty river that still keeps his name.

As time spins magically past, and the world, after much struggle, has gained leisure for something else besides war against Napoleon, our map begins to snap out quick sketches of more ships, some tacking east of

Greenland, others west, seeking anew to find a passage through the encumbering ice.

Look! That group of travelers toiling across the country from Hudson Bay to the Coppermine River is John Franklin's company, intent upon making a survey of the near-by coast. A few years afterward he is sailing down the Mackenzie to note carefully the bays and capes and deltas of that stretch of shore. Once again, twenty years later, we catch a glimpse of Franklin, this time in command of two ships and more than a hundred men. We watch them travel northward to the lower part of Baffin Bay. There at the edge of a far-spreading icepack the vessels are moored to wait for the opening of a channel between the uneasy floes.

Then, as we gaze at the animated map upon the screen, we behold the tiny image of those two adventurous ships fade quickly into nothingness, even as in reality they vanished forever from the sight of civilized men.[1]

After a pause that signifies two years of anxious hoping for news from the lost expedition, suddenly our map is sprinkled with relief parties racing north. Up through Davis Strait press many of them and turn

[1] Here are the dates of the various explorations we have been following: John and Sebastian Cabot, 1497; John Davis, 1585; Henry Hudson, 1607-11; William Baffin, 1615; Samuel Hearne, 1771; Alexander Mackenzie, 1789; John Franklin, 1818. John Franklin (his last expedition), 1845.

westward, some to be caught in the ice and held fast for several seasons. Other vessels from the Pacific struggle through Behring Strait on the chance that the missing explorers may have reached the open Arctic. Overland through Canada also push bands of searchers determined to rescue any survivors who may have taken refuge on shore. But only bones are found, and scattered relics, and a brief written record of three winters in the ice, and of Franklin's death. From the absence of the living and from the bones of a few of the dead, we infer that every man of Franklin's company perished too.

For a time now our glowing great map shows the dimpling Atlantic marked here and there with a drifting iceberg or a steamship plowing north to butt a path amid the huge floes that continually come crowding outward from the polar basin. One vessel, under the command of Roald Amundsen, follows through the much-sought Northwest Passage, which had been discovered fifty years earlier by Franklin Another band, under the command of resolute Robert Peary, succeeds eventually in arriving at the geographic North Pole, and finds there only ice floating over a deep ocean.

As we turn away from our imaginary animated cartoon, perhaps we wonder what has been the use of the four centuries of struggle to explore the region around the Arctic Ocean. What good is a Northwest

Passage so choked with ice that not even the stoutest ship can be sure of squeezing through in safety? What does the world owe to these hardy travelers who have spent years in charting strange coasts, testing the winds, studying the land, examining the waters, measuring their progress by the stars?

Instead of answering such questions directly, I will ask you another one. How have men found out the facts that are written in your geographies? Before any truthful map of a portion of the earth's surface can be drawn, somebody must journey to that place, look with his own eyes upon the mountains, lakes, and rivers, and report faithfully what he has seen. There is no other way.

Do you remember how John Cabot, the earliest explorer to sail in search of the Northwest Passage around America, turned back in discouragement because the land veered toward the east? In his ignorance, he feared that the shoreline continued in an enormous curve all the way across the sea to England.

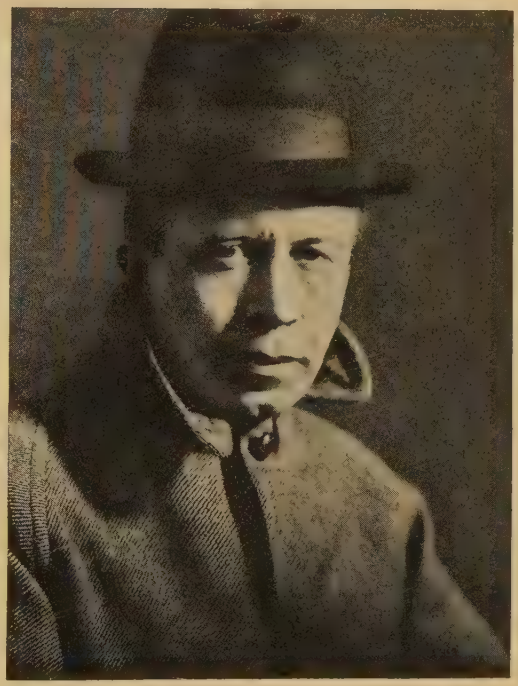
If later mariners had never dared to travel on until they discovered the shape and size and position of our arctic coast, we should now see a big blank space — or else a maze of fanciful lines — on the upper portion of our maps of the Western Hemisphere. In our minds, also, would be a big blank space whenever we

thought of the Far North. We should know nothing of the vast country that borders the Polar Sea. We should know nothing of its climate, its people, its animals, and its plants. Probably we should wonder about that mysterious region chiefly as the home of the north wind that comes sweeping down over the continent with vigor in its wings.

Though our present knowledge of the American Far North has cost much hardship and many lives, few deny that it has been worth the price. In the future, it is likely to be worth incomparably more than to-day.

The first explorers, as you know, considered the polar regions of doubtful use except as a passageway to places that lie beyond. After John Davis and William Baffin discovered whales west of Greenland, and other travelers found fur-bearing animals on land, people began to change their minds about the value of that part of the earth. Since whales and furs could be sold for money, the vast mysterious northern country was not wholly worthless. Nevertheless, nearly everybody believed that the Far North was good for nothing else. They regarded it as too hopelessly cold and dreary and desolate to be endured by any white men except a few traders, trappers, and missionaries. For generations this mistaken opinion has stuck in the minds of civilized persons.

That it is a mistaken opinion — an opinion based on most amazing ignorance — you will learn from reading this book. You may be sure that the following chapters, however astonishing they may seem at first, tell only the truth about Eskimo Land.



VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

This book is the story of an explorer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, who has helped to gather facts about our arctic coast. He has spent there ten winters and thirteen summers. He has traveled thousands of miles to and fro in that enormous region, now sailing along rocky shores, now clambering over mountains or skimming on snowshoes across frosty plains, now trudging for months over tumultuous sea ice, now walking knee-deep amid millions of wild flowers.

He has hunted on days so cold and clear that he could hear the footfall of a caribou breaking through crusted snow a mile away. He has sweltered in such summer heat that he was able to sleep only in a cellar dug out of the eternally frozen ground. He has struggled through countless winter blizzards; he has fought summer hordes of uncountable mosquitoes (and much preferred the blizzards).

He has lived with Eskimos who have learned to drink tea, to chew American gum, and to use the latest style of rifles. He has discovered others who had never seen a white man until they greeted him. He has dressed in furs and eaten raw frozen fish and gained weight on a diet of caribou meat and seal fat.

He has explored strange rivers and discovered large islands that were not even suspected to exist. He has supported his party entirely by hunting and fishing during long journeys over uninhabited lands and lonely seas. He has grown to love the Arctic more and more each year. He loves its beauty, freedom, and friendliness. Now, when he is far away from it, often he longs for a sight of the splendid, heaving ice-pack, even as a forest dweller in exile longs for the sight of trees.

Surely such an explorer is able to tell us many things that are true — and some that are also new — concerning the Far North and its people.

CHAPTER II

A Surprising Land

CHAPTER II

A Surprising Land

Our explorer's first visit to the arctic regions brought him surprise after surprise. The climate especially astonished him. He had expected that weather in the frigid zone would be cold even in summer. On

STEAMER "MACKENZIE RIVER" LEAVING FORT MACPHERSON

the contrary, never in all his life had he suffered more from the heat than on that northward journey down the broad Mackenzie River. The air was sweltering and humid. The passengers sat wilting on the deck of the little steamer, each one heavily veiled and

wrapped in thick clothes from top to toe, in miserable defence against the swarms of maddening mosquitoes. From the white-hot sky above, an intolerable sun blazed down upon the glittering water.

It blazed day and night when they got beyond the arctic circle, where there is no darkness in July. The

FLOWERS OF THE FAR NORTH

sun that shines at midday shines at midnight, though from a lower angle. Hour after hour after hour, endlessly on that endless voyage, the sun kept on shining, the mosquitoes kept on stinging, the human beings kept on sweltering and slapping, and — now pay attention, for this is the important point — on the land, vegetation kept on growing.

By vegetation I mean the flowering plants, ferns, lichens, and mosses that cover most of the polar land. With their foliage in the perpetual warm sunshine, they were busy every hour of the twenty-four, instead of resting in darkness part of the time, as is the habit of most green things farther south. For this reason, a plant can grow almost as much in one month in the Far North as it can in two months of similar temperature in Texas or any such locality.

Another reason for the remarkably rapid upspringing of stalk and bud and leaflet is an unfailing supply of moisture from the frozen ground below the mat of thirsty roots. If it were not for this underlying frozen muck, the prairie grasses and wild flowers would quickly shrivel beneath the hot summer sky in that land of little rain.

The Eskimos themselves are so accustomed to find solid frost a few inches below the surface of the soil that they cannot imagine any different condition in other places. Once when Stefansson explained to some of them that the ground in Africa does not freeze either in summer or winter, they did not believe him. Though they were too polite to shrug their shoulders or lift their eyebrows while he was speaking, they evidently thought that he was not telling the truth. They kept repeating, "There is always frost. How far must you dig to get down to it in that country far away?"

On this particular July of his first journey to the Arctic, the alert young explorer may have wondered if the jungles of torrid Africa could possibly be any hotter than this land forever frozen beneath its summer covering of green. He was soon to discover that

ARCTIC FLOWERS AND A BUTTERFLY

the "frigid" zone possesses two climates: one inland, another close to the sea.

In all parts of the world, as you have learned in your geography, an ocean modifies the climate of its coast. The water of the Arctic Ocean is usually some-

where between 32°, the freezing point of rain water, and 28°, the freezing point of sea water. Consequently, in summer it is much colder than the air above it, and in winter it is much warmer. For three months it acts like a huge refrigerator; and for the rest of the year it acts like an immense radiator. Therefore, in Eskimo Land, as nearly everywhere else, the climate of the seashore is cooler in summer and warmer in winter than the climate that prevails at the same elevation inland.

Though, of course, Stefansson knew this, he was surprised at the speed with which the temperature fell, as the boat traveled down stream toward the mouth of the Mackenzie. The heat diminished one degree for each mile of progress through part of the delta. Large trees on shore gave place to others much smaller, and those in turn vanished in the distance, leaving only low, willow-covered islands, among which the river wound sluggishly, in countless channels, toward the polar sea. Gradually the blazing sunshine began to fade in a soft mist that thickened into heavy fog, a fog so cool and damp and exhilarating that everybody felt happier at once. That is to say, everybody except the mosquitoes. Many of them, fluttering their delicate wings, were beaten back by the wind from the sea. Hundreds, however, must have clung to the boat, perhaps traveling in sheltered nooks. Thousands

were waiting to welcome Stefansson, when he disembarked at an Eskimo village. At times he may have wondered if they considered him juicier than the

A DOG TORMENTED BY ESKIMO MOSQUITOES

natives because he had a fairer skin. They really seemed to prefer to dine on him.

Nevertheless, no mosquitoes anywhere on earth could have found a healthier set of people upon whom to feast than these broad-faced, slant-eyed, wiry-haired inhabitants of the Far North. Most of them were

hardy looking; all of them were jolly. Never before had our explorer seen rounder and rosier children than the laughing youngsters of Eskimo Land.

A STURDY ARCTIC BABY

And how they played! All of them played all day. Some of them played all night. Several of them, without stopping to rest, played right on through the next day, too. And a few of the liveliest stayed awake continuously for three days, romping through game after game, while the unwinking sun circled endlessly around the sky. Anybody, young or old, who can be as active as that, certainly deserves to be called strong and healthy.

As for the grown folks, the majority were robust enough to eat as much as they liked at any hour, and to sleep as little as they chose, without damaging

their health. The few sickly ones among them had become ill, as a rule, from trying to imitate the food and dwelling habits of white men, who had not learned through generations of experience the best way of living in that peculiar climate.

As autumn approached, Stefansson was again surprised, this time at the way everybody rejoiced over the first snowfall and the first ice. One reason for such a welcome springs from the fact that Eskimos delight in moving from place to place. Winter is the season of most comfortable travel. Of course, river and seacoast travel by boats is easy in the warm weather, and many of the people make long journeys that way. But on summer journeys inland to hunt or to select wood for sledge-making in the forest toward the south, they are obliged to walk the entire distance over rough ground or through sticky mud. They must themselves carry their tents and pots and bedding and everything else they need, except such small luggage as can be packed upon the backs of dogs.

No doubt this ability to tramp for long distances, under heavy burdens, is another proof of their bodily vigor. It is another recommendation of the healthfulness of the climate.

Do you know that Eskimos spend most of the time out of doors the year around? When the cold weather freezes lakes and rivers and coats the land

ESKIMO DOGS WITH A LOADED SLED (THE SLED IS OF WHITE MAN'S DESIGN)

with snow, many a family harnesses a few dogs to a loaded sled and sets out on a camping trip to trap fur-bearing animals or to visit distant friends. Except at night, or when a blinding snowstorm makes travel impossible, they live, necessarily, in the open air. Even when they remain at home, the men usually are busy outside, and the children rarely go into the well-heated houses except to eat or to sleep. All through the daylight hours, they play hide-and-seek, they run and jump and wrestle, they kick balls hither and thither or slide down hill on pieces of slippery rawhide. If one child notices a frosted spot on another's face, he presses his warm hand upon it for a moment, until the white patch grows red. Then they go on playing as before.

No wonder these sturdy youngsters have rosier cheeks than pale-faced little Americans in the crowded schoolrooms and stuffy homes of cities in the temperate zone!

Another fact that astonished our explorer during his first autumn in the arctic regions was the cheerfulness with which the inhabitants looked forward to the dark winter. None of them seemed to care much when the sun blinked its red eye above the horizon for the last time that year and then sank from sight. They knew that soon their vacation time would begin, a time of short twilight days, when they could not

very well work and would therefore play. They expected their stores of dried caribou meat, stacks of frozen fish, and bags of seal oil to last until the spring hunting of seals. Meanwhile they intended to fish a little, talk much, eat as often as they chose, and amuse

INFLATED SEALSKINS TO BE USED FOR HOLDING SEAL OIL

themselves with singing, dancing, and story-telling through the long evenings.

When winter actually arrived, Stefansson was surprised to find the cold no more intense and the blizzards no worse than he had already experienced in his boyhood on the prairies of North Dakota. Indeed, the occasional bitter snaps of forty or fifty below zero seemed more endurable in the north than in the south,

because of his Eskimo clothes. A temperature of forty below, however, he enjoyed more than fifty, since the milder air was not so likely to sting his lungs when he inhaled quickly, while running or working hard.

Inland, as may be expected, winter days are often ten or fifteen degrees colder than near the sea. Even so, the lowest on record for these districts is higher than that of certain cities in the temperate zone. Eskimo Land is by no means the coldest place where people can live in comfort.

Our explorer found joy as well as comfort in the Far North. Not only was the clear keen winter weather more exhilarating than any other that he had ever known, but — wonderful again to relate! — the long, dreadful darkness turned out to be neither entirely dark nor really dreadful. Though the sun did not rise above the horizon for two months, there were six or seven hours of daily twilight bright enough for reading large print out of doors. At noon a red glow in the south proclaimed that the invisible sun had not sunk so very far down. At midnight, even in cloudy weather, the snow-whitened ground reflected light from hidden stars. Never in all his years in the polar country has Stefansson seen darkness so pitchy black as that of an occasional stormy night at home in the temperate zone. Nowhere this side of the equator is it possible to behold such glorious moonlight, turning the

EVERY TIME IS LAUGHING TIME FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE FAR NORTH

world to fairyland, as there in the magical Far North. For several days at a stretch, the moon sails, without setting, around and around and around the splendid sky. Traveling then is almost as easy as in the time of perpetual daylight.

As for the dreadfulness of winter, the three or four weeks around New Year's are called by some Eskimos the "dancing time." It is also the singing time and the feasting time and the laughing time. To be frank, it must be admitted that almost every time is laughing time for these happy, healthy people of the Far North.

Our explorer tells in his first book that the first winter he was happiest after the sun began to peep above the horizon and slide in a lengthening arc each day along the line of the southern hills. But in later books he has explained that he soon learned to miss the sun as little as did the Eskimos. The chief reason why he welcomed the season of increasing daylight was his desire to spend more hours in the open air. Though this was the coldest period of the year, everybody was busy out of doors, working or hunting or traveling with dogs and sledges to visit distant friends. The children, of course, played as usual, always and everywhere.

So far, each successive season had proved to be more enjoyable than the preceding. The glaring heat

of an inland summer had given place to the cool freshness of long bright days on the coast. Autumn had brought bracing cold and a chance to journey freely over new ice and snow. It had also enabled the Eskimos to repair their winter houses of earth and wood so that they might move out of their draughty

ARCTIC DUCKS—PACIFIC EIDER (LEFT) AND KING EIDER (RIGHT)

tents into more comfortable quarters. Winter had closed down over the country, icy, to be sure, with occasional blizzards of whirling dry snow, but it was merry within doors and blissfully invigorating in the open air. Our explorer had never before in all his energetic life felt so exuberantly well as now.

Spring was coming. Surely that would be the best time of any!

And — what do you suppose? — he was surprised again. Spring was thoroughly disagreeable. The first part of it was changeable, now snowing, now melting, now freezing, now raining. Storms of soggy snow soaked everybody or chilled them inside their waterproof clothes of sealskin. The nights were uncomfortably cold for tenting, and the days were too warm for sledging. On the roofs of all the houses, snow melted and leaked through, drip, drip, drip. The Eskimos had to move back into their tents, and they crouched shivering in the wet wind, while rain swept over the sodden land and slushy sea.

A YOUNG OWL ON THE ARCTIC PRAIRIE

Then swiftly the summer came. Clouds drifted across a blue sky. Gulls and ducks appeared, flying up and down the coast. Grass carpeted the prairies. Butterflies flitted over poppies and dandelions. Children ran shouting at play in cease-

less sunshine. Mosquitoes feasted gaily night and day.

No doubt, sturdy youngsters are the most valuable crop now or ever to be raised in the polar regions. They are the most valuable anywhere on earth, to be sure, and particularly so among the Eskimos, who be-

AN ESKIMO CHILD ASLEEP IN THE SUN

lieve that the best way to provide for their own old age is to bring up affectionate children, instead of toiling to gather property. Parents who happen to have more sons and daughters than they can manage to feed, give away the extra ones to friends who have few or none at all.

Rosy, fat, and jolly human beings, however, though the most precious, are by no means the only important product of the far north. Both land and sea are surprisingly rich in resources.

That is to say, our explorer was surprised, as usual. He had expected to see a barren and worthless country, fit only to be the abode of a few starving savages. Instead of that, he found miles and miles of prairies covered with grasses and mosses and wild flowers. He saw thousands of animals, many of them good to eat. He saw nets so crammed with fishes that every mesh seemed to hold a wriggling silvery body. He saw huge whales. He saw countless seals dotting the ice floes and herds of caribou grazing on the plain. He saw ovibos and bears and wolves and foxes and innumerable little marmots, fat as butter. He saw acres of good soil no more hopelessly frozen than Alaskan farms of twenty years ago, before civilization thawed the ground deep down a dozen feet or more. He saw forests of spruce and cottonwood, and thickets of alders as tall as trees. He saw chunks of copper, veins of iron ore, and cliffs of smoking coal that had been burning for centuries. In short, he saw a land capable of supporting a population of white people in cheerful industry and comfort.

Is it any wonder that he was surprised?

CHAPTER III

What the Eskimos Eat

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What the Eskimos Eat

The idea that our northern coast is a good place in which to settle down and make a living struck the Eskimos many centuries before it occurred to anybody else. At the present time, nobody knows where the ancestors of these contented people dwelt before they came to America. Some think that two or three thousand years ago they migrated hither from Asia, the home of their cousins, the Chinese, whom they resemble in coloring and in shape of face and head. You may not know that all the natives of America are cousins of the Chinese. Most authorities say that the Eskimos are merely one kind of American Indian, like the Sioux or Iroquois. Probably they used to live north of the Great Lakes, and came from there two or three thousand years ago, and never from Asia in any sense except that their forefathers in turn must have come from Asia ten or twenty thousand years earlier. Journeying from the Hudson Bay–Slave Lake country northward until they reached the arctic coast, some of them moved east into Greenland, others west into Alaska, while a few hundred crossed Behring Strait into eastern Siberia and there were discovered by the

earliest European travelers. This is Stefansson's view of the problem concerning the origin of the Eskimos. But he says that he cannot, of course, be sure about it.

So far as you and I are concerned at this moment, the important point is that they chose to remain in the Far North. They must have realized that they had found a home where they could get food and clothes and shelter from the country itself. If they had been unable to do this, they would have died there or journeyed elsewhere.

There was nothing to prevent them from going on. They were not afraid of the Indians who inhabited the forested regions toward the south. On the contrary, these Indians were so afraid of their northern neighbors that they fled from their own stone quarries on the Mackenzie River every summer, just before traveling parties of Eskimos arrived on their annual expedition to gather stones to form into knives and missile heads. Sir John Richardson, the earliest scientific traveler in that region, tells us that the timid Athabascans, as the inland Indians are there called, dared not slink back to their homes until after the independent visitors had departed in the autumn.

If the Eskimos had wished to remain near the quarries, without doubt they could have driven the Athabascans still farther south to seek new hunting grounds. Evidently, however, the northerners pre-

ferred to return to the shores of the Arctic Ocean for the greater part of the year. They had learned from experience that it was easier to make a living on the open coastlands of their beloved icy sea than far inland amid forests. The hunting was much better. Many

ESKIMOS FISHING

a winter, Athabascans in the south were starving on a diet of lean rabbits, while the round-cheeked Eskimos of the north feasted on fish, flesh, and fowl, with an abundance of seal oil to keep them in good health.

In such a country, as you will see, the natural food of the natives is meat. It is mainly a grassland resem-

bling prairies, with quick-flowering plants, an edible root or two, and a few low-growing berries. It is a land without gardens, fields, or orchards. Therefore it seems to me very lucky that most Eskimos do not care for vegetables or fruits. Though a polite and

AN OVIBOS COW

kindly people, those Eskimos who are still uncivilized are likely to spit out anything that tastes different from the food to which they are accustomed. In this respect, no doubt, they resemble other people everywhere. Even you would probably spit out your first bite of delicious frozen raw fish dipped in seal oil.

Nobody knows what were the food customs of the ancient Eskimos and their ancestors. Probably, wherever they traveled, they ate whatever they could get. Thousands of years ago, when the earliest settlers came rocking across the waves in their skin

OVIBOS CALVES

boats, or perhaps arrived by trudging over the plains, they must have been on the outlook for something to eat. Certainly they were in no way able to carry a large stock of provisions with them on the journey. It is sure that, like all other human beings, they had a habit of getting hungry every day.

Imagine it! If you were a weary Eskimo with a lively appetite and had just reached an uninhabited shore, what would you do first? Of course, you would try to find food.

In all likelihood those immigrants of long ago arrived in summer, when they could rely on having plenty of daylight for exploring their new home. No doubt, with an alert and hungry curiosity, they gazed in every direction. On the grassy prairies, they may have spied bands of grazing caribou, and herds of clumsy ovibos, a sort of sheep-cattle often called "musk-oxen," though they are not oxen and have no musk. Wolves, singly or in pairs, were trotting in different directions, each pretending not to notice the caribou they hoped to eat and the ovibos they wished they might have the ability to kill. Grizzly bears shuffled through willow thickets, peaceful vegetarians living on roots; slim, spry foxes stalked innumerable mice; roly-poly marmots dived, squeaking, into burrows.

On the beach, flocks of sandpipers and snipe scuttled busily over the wet sand, past groups of lazy gulls. Ducks and geese were flying toward low islands; loons flapped above the marshes; ptarmigan rose from hidden nests amid the sedges.

Out at sea, a whale spouted now and then, or the sleek head of a seal poked above the surface. At

A GULL; A FEMALE EIDER DUCK ON HER NEST; AND AN EIDER DUCK'S NEST WITH EGGS

intervals, a fish leapt into the air for a moment's curving flight over wavelets that concealed millions of others of countless shapes and sizes. It is possible that floating ice was in sight far out near the horizon. And, perhaps, swimming toward it was a mother polar bear, with her baby hanging on to her flank as he paddled along behind.

How those wanderers of long ago must have rejoiced at the sight of such an abundance of animals that might prove good to eat! Though they were doubtless hungry enough to eat anything, even the berries, roots, and mosses of the prairie, they never did relish such food. What they really wanted was fish or flesh or fowl.

On their arrival in the arctic regions, they must have known how to fish and hunt. Otherwise they would have perished in a few days. They used weapons tipped with stone or bone to spear fishes in river shallows. They could shoot with bows and arrows, as some of their descendants do to-day. It was easy for them to stalk the defenceless caribou which roamed in millions over the grasslands. It was easier to snare birds and marmots and rabbits. It was perhaps easiest of all to pursue and slay the clumsy ovibos.

Nevertheless, this new country confronted them with some new problems. They needed to get acquainted with the climate. Many a family, no doubt,

froze to death before they learned how to build houses that could be kept warm through the long winter. Many a colony must have starved during times of scant hunting, before they learned to store up fish when the fishing was good, to dry caribou meat when

COPPER ESKIMOS SHOOTING WITH BOWS AND ARROWS

caribou were plenty, and to fill with seal oil the greatest possible number of sealskin bags during the season when seal hunting was most convenient.

During Stefansson's years in the Far North, he learned to eat what the Eskimos ate. He enjoyed it, too. But on one particular trip he was obliged to

chew some extraordinary mouthfuls that were tough and hard to swallow. With his party of five Eskimos, he was journeying along the valley of a wooded river called the Horton. Because of constant blizzards and short, sunless days, it was impossible to find game. After devouring all their stock of food except a bag of seal oil, the travelers boiled some sealskins that they had intended to use to make boots. The next day they ate more sealskin and boiled part of a hundred-pound chunk of meat that they had chopped from the tongue of a whale and brought along to feed the dogs. As the animal had been dead four years, in summer washed by the sea, in winter buried under snow, it tasted stringy and so bitter that it made them rather sick.

Though they were not actually starving or even suffering much from hunger, because they had plenty of oil, they felt empty when they had nothing else in their stomachs. So they ate some tea leaves, ptarmigan feathers, and caribou hair to fill up the hollows under their ribs.

On the tenth day of their travels, fortunately, they reached a spot where they had buried grizzly bear skins two months earlier, with the expectation of sending these trophies to a museum later. Now, however, they changed their minds, and spent a day in digging down into the frozen ground to secure the greasy pelts.

A ham of caribou happened to be hidden in the same hole. That, together with the heads and eight paws of the bear skins, and also five Canada jays, provided the party with one day of high living.

After this, they were down to a diet of leather and oil again. They ate their snowshoe lashings and several fathoms of rawhide thongs. Fresh rawhide is good eating if well boiled; it reminded Stefansson of pigs' feet. He thinks that one of the real advantages of skin clothing over woolens in arctic exploration is that the former can be eaten, in case of need, or fed to the dogs. This would put off starvation a week or two.

In the particular expedition just described, the little company managed to reach camp three days later, and feasted on huge troughs of boiled venison until their much-enduring stomachs could hold no more.

Such famine fare as has been described forms a striking contrast to our explorer's first dinner as a guest of certain Eskimos who had never seen a white man before they greeted him. These primitive people, often called "savages" by the thoughtless, showed themselves as well-bred, kindly, and hospitable as any civilized white persons. Though they had never scratched a match, or heard a gun-shot, or smelled tobacco, or tasted sugar, or gazed at pictures, they were happy, they were healthy, they were fairly wise — and they were courteous to strangers.

At his first meeting with these gentle folk, nevertheless, Stefansson feared for a few moments that he had found enemies instead of friends. He had journeyed to the Arctic on his second visit, with the hope of discovering Eskimos who had never seen a white man. After two years of persevering effort (which you may read about in his book called *My Life with the Eskimo*), he succeeded at last in reaching the stretch of coast inhabited by the long-sought "savages."

From a snowhouse roof in one of their deserted villages, he spied several dark dots scattered over the white surface of the frozen channel before him. He knew that they were seal-hunters, each one seated on a block of snow beside a breathing-hole, while waiting for the animal to rise.

Our explorer halted his small party at a distance of a few hundred yards from the nearest hunter and sent forward one of his Eskimo companions to offer greeting. The sealer remained motionless, stooping forward as if intent upon the hole. But every second or two he raised his eyes to glance swiftly at the approaching stranger. When no more than five paces intervened between the two men, the "savage" grasped a long knife and sprang to his feet in readiness to fight. Meanwhile he began a monotonous noise, uttering a sound with every breath. He believed the newcomers were spirits. He feared that, unless he kept up this

A GROUP OF SNOWHOUSES

ceaseless moaning until they vanished, he would be stricken dumb forever.

After ten minutes of moaning on one side and of rapid, terrified jabbering on the other, the two men began to understand the situation, for they spoke very nearly the same language. As soon as the sealer recovered his wits sufficiently to listen and to answer, he stepped close to the messenger and felt of him to make sure that he was not a spirit and also that he had no knife hidden under his clothes. When satisfied upon both these points, the "savage" invited all three visitors to follow him to a village of snowhouses a few miles away.

As they walked onward, other seal-hunters, each armed with knife and harpoon, appeared from different directions on the ice and joined the procession. At the village itself, forty more persons — men, women, and children — were waiting excitedly to see the strangers. Upon being informed that the new arrivals were friends from a distance and meant no harm to them, the entire crowd pressed forward in greeting.

As each came up, he said, "I am So-and-So. I am well-disposed. I have no knife. Who are you?"

Immediately after hearing the names of the travelers, and being assured that they were friendly and had no knives under their clothing, each expressed his satisfaction and stood aside to allow the next to pre-

sent himself. The women were in greater hurry to be introduced than were the men, because they must, they said, go right back to their houses to cook something for these welcome guests to eat.

No sooner had these kindly women vanished indoors than half a dozen men set to work to build a

ESKIMOS WATCHING THE ARRIVAL OF VISITORS

snowhouse for the visitors, who stood at ease, surrounded by an eagerly hospitable crowd. When the house was finished and furnished with skins, lamp, and other equipment, it was presented to its new owners. They were told that everybody hoped that they would remain until the last piece of meat in the village had been eaten. So long as they stayed, no man would go forth to hunt, no woman would spend a moment

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BUILDING A SNOWHOUSE FOR THE VISITORS (NOTICE THE DOGS ASLEEP IN THEIR HARNESS)

in unnecessary sewing. But all with song and dance and story would celebrate a special holiday in honor of the strangers who had journeyed hither from an unknown distant land.

Before the new home was entirely completed, children came running from the village to announce that their mothers had dinner ready. The houses were so small that it was not convenient to invite the whole party into the same one. Furthermore, it was not etiquette to do so. Therefore each of the three guests was taken to a different place. Stefansson's host was the hunter who had caught the first glimpse of them on the ice. He declared that it was fitting for the leader of the party to eat the first meal with him, because his wife's ancestors long ago had likewise traveled from some place far to the west. He said that she wished to ask many questions about everything back there.

Instead of a talkative and inquisitive person, however, the wife proved to be motherly, kindly, and hospitable, like all her countrywomen. Her first questions were not of the land from which the explorer had come, but of his footgear. Weren't his feet just a little damp, and might she not pull off his boots and dry them over the lamp? Would he not consent to put on a pair of her husband's dry socks? Was there not some small hole in his mittens or coat that she could mend for him?

She said that she had boiled some seal-meat for him, but no fat, since she did not know whether he preferred the blubber cooked or raw. For themselves, they always cut it in small pieces and ate it raw; for him, if he chose, she could quickly boil a portion in the pot that still hung over the lamp.

When he told her that his tastes were similar to theirs, she was delighted. Smilingly she remarked that people seemed to be much alike, no matter where they lived. She said that she would now treat him exactly as if he were one of her own people come from afar to visit them. In fact, she believed that he *was* an Eskimo, since he spoke her own language, though with a slight flavor of strangeness.

This praise pleased Stefansson immensely, because he had been studying hard for nearly four years to learn the difficult Eskimo language. It cannot have happened often in the history of the world that the first white man to visit a primitive race was one who could understand their speech.

During dinner, to be sure, he had no chance to talk or to listen, since everybody's jaws were busy with food. As the floor of the little domed house was almost entirely occupied by the bed-platform of snow blocks covered with skins, the children stood close together at one side of the doorway, chewing and gazing solemnly at their guest. In the space on the other side

were the cooking-lamp and pots and so forth. The hostess sat on the edge of the bed-platform in front of a tiny table on which lay the steaming chunks of boiled meat. Stefansson sat next to her, with his host on his left. Each one held a piece of meat in the left hand, a knife of native copper in the right, and took large bites and chewed and chewed and chewed.

In the horseshoe-shaped, three-foot-high doorway, three dogs waited, side by side, watching for somebody to finish the picking of a bone and toss it in their direction. As soon as one succeeded in catching a morsel, he retired to the alleyway to devour his prize in peace before returning to his position in line. When dinner was over, they all went away unbidden, to curl up and sleep in the alleyway or out of doors.

The meal was of two courses: the first, meat; the second, soup. Before beginning to eat, the hostess picked out the lower joint of a seal's foreleg, squeezed it firmly between her hands to make sure that nothing should drip from it later, and passed it to Stefansson. The next most desirable piece was squeezed in the same way and passed to her husband, and others in turn to the rest of the family. When this had been done, one extra piece was set aside in case the guest should need a second helping. The rest of the boiled meat was divided into four portions, and sent to four families in the village who had no fresh seal-

meat of their own. Those same families received similar gifts from every household in which cooking had been done that day.

During the feast, presents of food were brought from other houses. Apparently the women all knew what their neighbors had put into their respective cooking-pots. Whoever had anything a bit different to offer seemed to wish to share it with others. Every minute or two, a small girl messenger appeared in the doorway with a platter of something to add to the meal. Some of the gifts were sent especially to Stefansson. One mother said that, however they divided the rest of what she was sending, the boiled kidney was for him. Another mother sent him a piece of seal-flipper, with the message that he could have a whole one to eat all by himself, if he would take breakfast at their house the next morning.

After he had eaten his fill of fresh seal-meat, he drank two pint-cupfuls of soup made by pouring cold seal blood into boiling broth as soon as the meat had been taken out of it. Then guest and host moved farther back on the bed-platform, where they could sit comfortably propped up against bundles of soft caribou skins while they talked.

To be candid, it should be said that the Eskimos did most of the talking, because our explorer was much more interested in studying their thoughts than in

uttering his own. Among other astonishing remarks, they spoke of certain distant folk who were said to have no chins. Beyond this tribe dwelt numbers of mysterious white men, some of whom had but one eye in the middle of the forehead. These men were very queer in their choice of food. Instead of living entirely on meat and fish, as was proper, they ate stuff kept in cans and boxes — stuff so extremely unpleasant in taste that even the politest Eskimo was obliged to spit it out.

In response to this, no doubt, our explorer looked sympathetic, and let it go at that. He knew the uselessness of attempting to explain that food habits differ in different countries. To these contented dwellers in that isolated portion of the arctic regions, the rest of the world was of no importance. So far as they were concerned, the earth consisted of their beloved icy sea bordered by lands that were green in summer and powdered with snow in winter. Except for a few friendly neighbors, except for reports of treacherous Indians to the south and rumors of amusingly peculiar white men to the east, their notion of other places was a big blank blur of nothing at all. It was only natural that they should chuckle and shrug their shoulders at tales of customs unlike their own.

Stefansson, with his wider knowledge, as he listened to these marvelously unsavage "savages," pon-

dered over their ancestors, those pioneers who, centuries ago, wandered to this land abounding in game. Settling down there, they had thrived for generations upon a diet of meat. He reflected also on other races: copper-skinned men crouching over roast buffalo and kettles of corn, brown men lazily scooping out cocoanuts and breadfruit, black men feasting on rhinoceros steak and innumerable bananas, yellow folk contented with a diet of rice and fish, and, lastly, countless white children consuming pie and ice cream and candy.

The truth is, as you can readily see, that people in every land like the sort of food to which they are accustomed. This is remarkably fortunate for everybody.

CHAPTER IV

How They Dress

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How They Dress

The biggest piece of luck that ever happened to a migrating people awaited the first Eskimos who came roaming over the arctic prairies centuries ago. Among the many beasts that they found industriously living off the country were two of most particular and immense importance. If these early settlers had been able to search the whole earth for animals best fitted to supply their needs in their new home, they could have discovered none anywhere capable of being more useful to them than two that were already there: the seal and the caribou. The seal alone could provide them with food, clothes, heat, and shelter. The caribou furnished their favorite meat and clothing that was the very best possible to wear in such a climate.

No doubt, before arriving in the Far North, the Eskimo pioneers were dressed in skins. After they settled down to live there, they continued to wear the same kind of clothing. Though wool hung long and thick upon the shaggy ovibos that fed among the hills, the inhabitants of that land never learned to spin or weave or knit. They were entirely contented with their fur garments. Even to-day their descendants

TWO COPPER ESKIMOS IN HOLIDAY DRESS

wear the skins of wild beasts for at least nine months of the year. Where there are traders they buy woven cloth for summer use, because it is cooler than hides. As underwear, also, it provides protection against sand-flies and mosquitoes. But for their actual needs in that line, clothing of caribou skin is the only and absolute essential to keep Eskimos alive and warm and jolly in their own peculiar land.

Our explorer discovered this to be true in his own case likewise, when he reached the "frigid" zone on his first visit (1906). He was not nearly so well prepared to be comfortable in that climate as had been the earliest immigrants. He was dressed in a summer suit of thin serge, and wore a stiff hat on his head. The chilly fog of the coast, though magically refreshing after the inland heat, must have caused him to shiver. Certainly he lost no time in changing his array for an outfit of furs made in Eskimo fashion by patient Eskimo women — by far the most expert seamstresses of whom he has any knowledge.

In the coldest weather this outfit was double from head to foot. The undergarments had the fur turned in, from socks to mittens. The outer clothing had the fur turned out, except on the palms of the outer mittens and the soles of the boots. Both the undershirt and the coat had hoods that protected the ears, while leaving the cheeks and forehead exposed. A belt

completed the outfit. This the explorer found he had frequently to tighten or loosen or take off. Usually his shirt hung loose over his trousers, but on windy days when icy breezes blew, he put on his belt to keep out the draft. When he grew too warm from working or running, he removed it so that the cool air might swirl over his hot skin. In colder weather, he wore an outer coat over the belted shirt. In the nippiest times of winter, he changed the belt to the very outside and drew it tight in order to hold in every bit of warmth.

The Eskimos taught him how to wear his clothes and how to keep them dry by shaking the snow from the outside and the hoar frost from the inside every night before entering a warm house. They also taught him all that they knew about hunting caribou, so that, on his next visit to the Far North, he was able to gather skins to be used in making his new autumn suit. In that country, it is fashionable to wear old clothes all summer and appear in fine new outfits at the beginning of winter.

While he was so lucky as to have kind teachers to show him how to live most comfortably in this strange country, the Eskimo pioneers of long ago were obliged to learn everything from experience. Probably it did not take them many years to discover that different kinds of skins were valuable for special purposes.

They learned to use fish skins for rain-proof bags, bird skins for bags and hand-wipers, white whale skins for boot soles and boat covers, fox skins for coats if nothing better were available, bearskins for mittens and sometimes for trousers, sealskins for boots, boats, and

MEN'S STYLES AMONG THE COPPER ESKIMOS

for bags to hold oil. Most important of all, they found out that caribou skin was the best for clothes that were expected to keep the cold out and hold the warmth in. Eventually there grew up many local fashions of cut and adornment. In Alaska and near the Mackenzie River, clothes are likely to be trimmed with fringes of wolf or wolverine fur. In and near Victoria Island, where Stefansson met the Eskimos who

had never seen white men, strips of leather are made into a sort of ribbon and colored with red ochre. These are used for trimming.

One lesson that probably cost the Eskimos many a shiver to learn was that the skin of a live caribou

WOMEN'S STYLES AMONG THE COPPER ESKIMOS

changes with the seasons. After uncounted trials, they must have decided that the last month of summer was the best time to hunt caribou for the hides. In late autumn, the skins are too thick to handle easily. In winter, they are too thin and the hair is loose. In spring and summer, they are riddled with bot-fly

holes, and, until the end of July, they are patchy with bare spots.

When I say that caribou skins are in best condition in August, you must not get the impression that Eskimos are ever unwilling to hunt them. They rejoice any week in the year at a chance to dine on fat caribou. Hunters will spend days in searching the broad prairies for a glimpse of the deer. Hidden behind a rock, or lying flat on the open ground, they will wait patiently any number of hours for a herd to browse slowly nearer and nearer, until within shooting distance. Because it is their business, and not in the least so-called "sport," they keep at it long after they are too tired to enjoy it as play, though even as work they seem to find more pleasure in it than do other men in other kinds of work. Their hunting is done all the year around to get food, and in the proper season to get clothing. It is never done simply for fun.

Nowadays many Eskimo hunters use spy-glasses to scan the country in search of game. They have rifles which they buy from white traders. Some, however, such as the so-called "savages" whom Stefansson discovered, depend upon the same kind of weapons as were made by their ancestors of long ago.

In the last chapter, I told you about a dinner that Stefansson ate as a guest of these friendly people.

During his visit with them, he was interested in the bows and long copper-tipped arrows owned by the men of the tribe. He told them that, if they would show him how they killed caribou, he would show them how he did it. Immediately they set up a block of snow to serve as a target, and shot at it from a line about thirty or thirty-five yards away. When they tried their best, they could send an arrow a bit over one hundred yards. Ordinarily they can hit caribou at from twenty-five to fifty yards and, rarely, at seventy-five yards.

When their exhibition was over, our explorer set up a stick at about two hundred yards, and then walked back to the shooting line, while all the people gazed quietly at him, without the slightest idea what he was going to do next. At the sudden loud bang of his gun, the women and children made a wild scramble for the houses, while the men ran back about fifteen or twenty yards and stood talking together excitedly behind a snow wall. At once he went to them, and asked them to come with him to the stick, and see what had happened to it. After some persuasion, three of them consented, but, unfortunately for him, it turned out that he had failed to hit it. At this, they seemed much relieved, until he said that he would try again. They protested earnestly against this, declaring that so loud a noise would scare all the seals

away from their hunting grounds, and in consequence the people would starve.

In spite of this objection, however, he considered it best to prove to them that he could hit that stick at two hundred yards. So, after explaining that all people used guns in the west for seal-hunting, and that the sound did not scare the seals, he aimed again. This time his shot struck the mark fairly. When he pointed to the bullet hole in the stick, the people glanced at it indifferently and began to talk again about the way the gun roared. They listened politely while he told them that he could kill a polar bear or a caribou at twice the distance that the stick had been from him. One of them then asked if he could with his rifle kill a caribou on the other side of a mountain. Upon hearing his answer that he could not, they informed him that a great medicine man in a neighboring tribe had a magic arrow by which he could kill caribou on the other side of the biggest mountain. In other words, much to Stefansson's surprise, they thought that his rifle was nothing wonderful.

Later, when he showed them his field-glasses which made far-away things seem near and clear, they were of course interested. They clapped and laughed as he peered in this direction and that to catch glimpses of caribou that were to them invisible. Then they asked: "Now that you have looked for the caribou that are

here to-day, will you not also look for the caribou that are coming to-morrow, so that we can know where to lie in ambush for them?"

When they heard that his glasses could not see into the future, they were disappointed. They declared that their magicians had charms which enabled them to behold what the morrow would bring forth.

By the way, these primitive folk wear long-tailed coats trimmed with strips of white deerskin, bone buttons, or weasel-tails as charms. No doubt they consider their own fashions much superior to ours, exactly as they take pride in their medicine-men who take pretended journeys to the moon. In respect to clothes and country, as well as food, people love best that to which they are accustomed and which is their very own.

I think that anybody who is fond of outdoor life would leave a bit of his heart in Eskimo Land, if he could ever go on a caribou hunt in autumn.

As we trudge across the rolling, grassy hills of the so-called "Barren Grounds," everybody carries a bundle on his — or her — back. The men and women take the bulky things, such as bedding, tents, and cooking utensils. The dogs peg along steadily under double packs nearly as heavy as they are themselves. When caribou are sighted, the women and children stop to make camp, while the men hasten on to stalk the

AS WE TRUDGE ACROSS THE "BARREN GROUNDS," EVERYBODY CARRIES A BUNDLE

game. After shooting the animals, they take off the skins, cut the meat into strips, and spread both out to dry. By this time, the camp is ready, usually pitched on a hilltop that overlooks the surrounding

THE DOGS CARRY PACKS NEARLY AS HEAVY AS THEMSELVES

country. Everybody gathers about a fire that crackles and leaps in the darkness, for the sun now sets every evening. The dogs draw near in a circle, blinking at the flames, their short ears cocked now and then at the sound of a wolf's howl from the shadows beyond. Then after a delicious supper of caribou head that has

been rotated before the fire until it is roasted through, even to the base of the tongue and the center of the brain, all the party fall into a long blissful sleep in the most delightful air on earth.

A RACK FOR DRYING FISH AND SEALSKINS

Hunting, as you see, is the men's share of the labor necessary to provide a winter's supply of clothing. Ordinarily the women do all the rest of the work, except when they are so very busy that they need help from the men. The skin is first dried; then the

flesh side is gone over with a dull metal or stone scraper. The skin is next dampened, allowed to remain moist for half an hour or half a day, then dried before a fire, and scraped a second time. This treatment leaves the flesh side white and soft and free from odors.

After cutting the skins the right shape with sharp knives, the women sew the seams with thread made of caribou sinew. Most Eskimos now use steel needles that have been brought to them by white men. Their ancestors probably had only bone needles, or possibly some of copper, such as are even now common among the tribes living near places where copper may be found.

Eskimo women are notably skilful seamstresses, as you have already been told. Naturally there are careless ones among them as well as everywhere else, but the best ones are priceless. On Stefansson's journeys of exploration in the arctic regions, frequently he engaged an entire family at a good rate of pay in order to secure the services of the mother's skilful fingers.

Skins for clothing can be obtained just as well by white hunters as by Eskimos. But preparing the hides means hard work; and the unbelievably careful stitching of garments that must be both windproof and waterproof, requires needlewomen trained by years and generations of practice. Their waterproof seams are probably the only really waterproof sewing in the

world. White bootmakers try to render their boots waterproof by rubbing or soaking grease into the needle-holes. On the contrary, if an Eskimo seamstress sees you oiling boots that she has made, she is likely to

THIS SHOWS AN "UMIAK," A LARGER CANOE THAN A "KAYAK" (SEE PAGE 74)

become angry. She considers it an insult to be suspected of stitching so poor that it needs to be greased before it will keep out moisture. Dampening a new pair of boots causes the sinew thread to swell, so that they are even more waterproof when wet than when dry. Curiously enough, if you want your feet to

be dry, you wet your wading boots before you put them on.

Not only are boots, boats, bags, and raincoats made of sealskin, but also a peculiar kind of garment worn

SKINNING A SEAL

in connection with the small hunting canoe or *kayak*. The sleeves are lashed tight around the wrists, and the hood fitted close around the face, while the lower edge of the coat is drawn tight with a drawstring around

the canoe's mouth, after the hunter takes his seat. Thus, even if the boat upsets, no water can enter it.

It is chiefly in Greenland and Alaska that these kayak garments are used. Many Eskimos have never heard of them.

As you know already, seal blubber is a food that corresponds to the butter and fat bacon eaten by white people. It also supplies light in winter and heat for house and cooking. The intestines of the seal provide translucent membrane for windows. Indeed, the seal is the most useful of all the arctic animals, since it furnishes everything that is actually necessary for persons living in that country.

There are three methods of hunting seals. The simplest way is to find them swimming around in open water and then throw a harpoon at them from wherever you happen to be, on shore or on an ice floe or in a boat. Another method is to wait beside a seal hole until the animal pokes its nose up to breathe, thus giving the hunter a chance to spear it. This is what the "savage" Eskimos were doing when our explorer first met them and was invited to dinner. In the third method, a hunter pretends to be a seal himself and crawls, cautiously, close enough to a real seal to kill it.

This last way is used especially in spring, when seals are lying on top of the ice, basking in the warm

sun. They look like small black dots sprinkled over the vast whiteness of the ocean. Each is dozing beside a hole through which he has all winter been getting his supply of fresh air. He kept it open by continual gnawing as the ice froze thicker and thicker.

SEALSKINS PEGGED OUT TO DRY

Now, in the mild weather of late May, he has enlarged the space from two inches to a foot and half, so that he can haul himself up on top of the ice. There he sprawls on an incline so slippery that the least twitch of his body may send him sliding into the water.

Many a time has Stefansson spent hours in wriggling sidewise over the chilliest kind of ice; now lying

flat, as if dozing for a few moments; now squirming onward; now bending his knee, as if to scratch his back with an imaginary hind flipper; now lifting his head to look around in all directions, as is the custom of wise arctic seals on guard against polar bears. Meanwhile the real seal watches cautiously, in the intervals between his half-minute naps, until he is sure that the uneasy dark form is only another seal. When near enough to shoot, the hunter fires, drops his gun, and runs at top speed in an effort to catch the dead beast before he slides into his hole. Often has our explorer been too late and has seen merely a splash as the animal disappeared.

Many Eskimos believe that seals are always thirsty, because they live in the salt ocean, and are therefore anxious to be killed by those hunters who will give them a drink of fresh water after they are dead. That is why a dipperful is usually poured into the mouth of a newly slain seal. If a man neglects to do this, every other seal learns about his carelessness and will never allow himself to be killed by that particular hunter.

Though I cannot say that seals ever tumbled over each other in their eagerness to be shot by Stefansson, he was always able to catch enough to feed his party during travels over sea ice hundreds of miles from shore. When on land, the explorer depended chiefly

on caribou and ovibos, with an occasional polar bear or seal in addition. The skins were used as bedding and as materials for tents, boats, and new clothes. By and by I shall tell you some of their adventures while on these journeys of exploration, some of them to distant, uninhabited islands, others so far from land out on the drifting sea ice that Eskimos never ventured there.

It was fully as lucky for them as it had been for the Eskimo pioneers of one or two thousand years ago that the native animals of the arctic regions are the very ones capable of supplying everything necessary for the support of human beings who may wish to visit or settle in that country.

These animals certainly enjoy the climate. Caribou need no shelter through the long winters. They grow fat on the rich vegetation of the prairies, brushing aside with their noses the light snow that may cover the moss and dried grass, or pawing through deeper drifts in hollows that hold juicier mouthfuls. Even in blizzards, they graze, facing the wind. This proves that they do not mind the cold. As for the shaggy ovibos, placidly feeding in distant valleys, they pay no attention whatever to the weather. Crisp sunshine, clouds, or driving storms are all the same to them, snug inside their coats of wool and straggly hair. Seals, perhaps, are the luckiest and happiest of all, for the polar sea is full of fishes, their favorite fare. Indeed, northern waters

are said to contain, per square mile, many more living creatures of every size, from diatoms to whales, than do oceans at the equator.

However, no animal is quite so lucky as man in his power to move from place to place and settle down to live where he chooses. Fishes flourish under water, birds in the air, crocodiles in swamps, tigers in tropical jungles, and arctic animals in their native polar zone. Human beings can swim — though not, of course, so well as fishes. They can fly — a little. They can wade through some marshes. They can live in hot countries — at least for a time.

And — now listen! — with the help of the caribou, the seal, the ovibos, the whale, the fox, and a few others, they can learn to eat heartily, dress comfortably, live contentedly, and doubtless make money in the vast regions of the Far North.

Eskimos are doing it now. For example, Stefansson knows of trappers, on the north coast of Canada, who can get as many as two hundred foxskins in a good season. When sold for forty dollars each, these bring an income of eight thousand dollars a year. That is surely worth earning.

If Eskimos can do it, why not white men? The answer is that in certain parts of the Arctic many white men are doing it already.

CHAPTER V

Conquering the Cold

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Conquering the Cold

In most countries a man is fortunate if he owns one home that can be kept cool in summer and warm in winter. In the polar regions, though Eskimos are poor in so far as money is concerned, every family is able to have any number of houses. They easily build new dwellings or repair old ones. As the seasons change, they move from tent to hut, from hut to snow-house, and back again. They carry with them whatever they need of bedding and lamps and pots and provisions, leaving the remainder of their goods unprotected to await their return, for these friendly and generous people rarely steal from each other.

During the many years which our explorer spent north of the arctic circle, he lived in many dwellings. The first one was a tent of canvas bought from white traders. In the old days natives used skins to cover the tent frames, some of which were in the shape of wigwams, others like huge round baskets bottom side up. Even now skin tents, being warmer than canvas, are preferred during camping trips in cold weather.

The greatest objection to living in a tent in summer

in that country is that mosquitoes squeeze through every crack and torment the occupants to a frenzy. Though smudges are built at night, the insects seem able to stand rather more smoke than Eskimos can.

A WINTER TENT

Therefore sound sleep is rare during the fly season. One of the first things Eskimos buy from traders is mosquito netting to protect their faces in daytime and their beds at night.

Because of its mountainous nature, most of Green-

land is covered with ice, making that land very different from the other Eskimo countries. This ice is on the whole a bad thing for the Greenlanders, but it has at least one good effect — there are few mosquitoes.

A SUMMER TENT

Generally speaking, summer tent life is more uncomfortable inland than on the coast, where the sea breezes drive away the mosquitoes.

Tents are uncomfortable in autumn and in spring because they are poorly heated or not heated at all.

At those seasons it is likely that the natives shiver every day. Occasionally in summer also Stefansson has seen them shiver, but never in winter.

Indeed, Eskimo winter dwellings are nearly perfect in so far as protection from cold is concerned. The first one in which our explorer lived was an old shack that had been built of sod and earth over a frame of driftwood. (Sometimes whalebones are used as rafters.) As soon as the snow had begun to melt and drip through the roof the previous spring, its owners had moved into a tent. After the freeze-up in autumn, an Eskimo friend helped Stefansson to chop out the layer of ice on the ground inside and lay down a floor of split logs. To heat the house he had a galvanized iron stove, like those used by prospectors and pioneers all through the Northwest.

Another kind of house in which he had a chance to sleep while on a hunting trip was made of willows woven into a dome-shaped framework. The spaces between the branches had been stuffed with moss and the entire structure covered with snow. In the middle of the floor was a fireplace of big stones directly beneath a square window in the roof. When it was time to cook a meal, a fire was lighted and the window pane of translucent membrane was removed, in order to create a draft. After the cooking was done, the last embers of the fire were thrown outdoors, and the win-

dow put in, so that heat from the stones kept the air warm until the next meal.

In some districts, houses were warmed by making a fire outside in which stones were placed — the hot stones being later rolled inside to radiate their stored-

ALASKA ESKIMOS COVERING THE FRAME OF A WICKER TENT

up heat. The best method of heating, however, was that of burning animal fat in stone lamps. Most of the Eskimos who can obtain firewood now use stoves made either in America or in Europe. In some places the wood is secured by chopping down trees, in others it is found as drift timber on the sea beach or along the banks of rivers. Lamps were used

in the house of Ovayuak, who, Stefansson says, is the finest Eskimo he has ever known.

It was as Ovayuak's guest, during our explorer's first winter in the Far North, that he began to live like a real Eskimo, eating the same food, without salt (for which he soon lost all craving), and sleeping in the same house with at least twenty-three of the family, many of them cousins or other relatives.

The house was built of driftwood, with earthen walls five or six feet thick at the base, and a roof sloping up to a level space about six feet square in the middle of which was a window three feet in diameter. In each corner of the house stood a soapstone lamp shaped like a half-moon. A wick of powdered moss, pussy willow cotton, ivory or bone sawdust, was patted into a thin layer, one edge in the oil, the other along the brim of the lamp. Only that part which stuck out of the oil would burn. Eskimo housekeepers know how to trim such lamps so that they do not smoke or produce an unpleasant odor.

Some lamps are self-filling. A mass of blubber is hung about a foot above the flame, slightly to one side. As the lamp burns, the oil in the bowl is gradually used up. The lower the oil, the more of the wick is exposed, and the bigger the flame grows. The higher the flame, the nearer it reaches to the blubber so that oil tries out and trickles down into

TENTS OF THE COPPER ESKIMOS

CARIBOU-SKIN TENTS OF THE COPPER ESKIMOS

the bowl below. As the oil trickles faster, the bowl fills up, narrowing the wick and lessening the flame, until the blubber cools off and ceases to drip. A lamp properly arranged will burn in this way, now higher, now lower, for six or eight hours at a time without requiring attention.

Eskimos are fond of having their houses exceedingly hot during that part of the year when the weather outdoors is exceedingly cold. In Ovayuak's house the temperature was usually above eighty degrees, and often above one hundred when meals were being cooked. Frequently Eskimos sit nearly naked in houses so hot as to be almost unbearable to a white man.

One secret of keeping the air in a room warm is to place the door in the floor instead of in a wall. If air outside is perhaps thirty degrees below zero and that inside is seventy degrees above, when a door of the customary American size and position is opened, the heavy outside air rushes in along the floor, while the light inside air rushes out through the upper half. Eskimos know better than to waste heat in such a foolish fashion. The entrance to their style of house is by means of a tunnel, perhaps ten yards long, and in some cases so low that a man must stoop in walking through it. The inner end of the tunnel opens into the house by a trap door in the floor. Though the lid is seldom laid over this hole, cold air in the

alleyway is so much heavier than the warm air in the house that it will not rise except when the roof ventilator, a hole two to six inches in diameter, is kept open. This allows a current of fresh cold air to flow in below and push the topmost stale hot air out through the hole.

One of Stefansson's narrowest escapes during his busy years in the Arctic happened in an old snowhouse. Now a new snowhouse has porous walls with air between the packed crystals. But an old snowhouse is lined with solid ice formed by the refreezing of the inner surface of the snow after it has been melted by the heat of lamps or stoves. Fresh air can enter such an ice house only through an open door or a ventilating hole.

When the party of two white men and two Eskimos reached one of these houses on a cold winter night, they decided to camp in it. Being warm from rapid travel, they were in a hurry to heat up the room before they became chilled. So they closed the door, without noticing that there was no other hole in the smooth dome of ice that glittered over them.

Since cooking was the leader's job that night, he set the stove on a block of snow and was soon on his knees, cutting snow into the kettle to make water. His white companion sat next to him on the edge of the bed-platform. Next was Tannaumirk, and then

Natkusiak upon the floor. Both the Eskimos were talking and laughing, as usual.

In the midst of one of his funny stories, which he told with a good deal of pantomime, Tannaumirk suddenly threw himself backward upon the bed and uttered a sort of gurgling noise. Although the others supposed that these actions and gurglings were part of the pantomime, they wondered why he remained flat on his back. When Dr. Anderson, the other white man, turned to examine the prostrate Eskimo, he fell down, face forward, on top of Tannaumirk. Instantly Stefansson extinguished the primus stove, for he knew that they were being poisoned by monoxide gas.

Natkusiak, at the sound of a quick command to break a hole in the wall back of him, tried to rise in order to reach his knife. When he found himself powerless to do so, he was so scared that with his last strength he threw himself back against the loose block of snow with which they had closed the door. He then crawled outdoors on all fours but was too weak to stand up. Following him out, our explorer fell down beside him.

It was a calm starlit night, with the temperature about 45° below zero, and all of them were lightly clad. Though Stefansson tried to crawl back into the house in order to drag out the others, he was too weak to do more than lie flat on the ground. Fresh air

flowing in through the opened doorway, however, revived the two inside. Presently they came creeping out, and he managed to return to get their sleeping-bags, into which they all crept in time to escape from freezing to death. They had certainly learned a lesson about the value of ventilation.

Do you know that many Eskimos have never seen a snowhouse? There are other districts where people use them only on camping trips in winter. Others, like the gentle "savages" of whom I have spoken, dwell in snowhouses from four to seven months each year. They believe that all men everywhere do the same.

Perhaps some of you already know how a snowhouse is built. In the first place, the snow must be so firm that footprints of a deerskin boot are barely visible. It must be so evenly packed that a stick, when driven downward with a steady push, will pass smoothly through. With long knives men cut out domino-shaped blocks about four inches thick, fifteen to twenty inches wide, and twenty to thirty-five inches long.

The first block is set up, as a domino might be on a table, and the inner edge is slightly undercut so that the block leans inward. The second block is propped against the first and similarly undercut. In a few minutes the cold cements them together and to the drift below them. The oval or circle that is to

be the ground plan may be determined by eye, as the builder sets up the blocks, one after the other, or it may be marked by means of a string with a peg at each end, one peg planted in what is to be the center of the house, the other used to draw a circle.

When the first tier has been completed, a diagonal slice is cut from the top edge of a block downward across one or two others to the base line. In the niche thus formed is placed the first block of the second tier, which is then built up spirally. The blocks of each tier must lean inward at a greater angle than those of the tier below, so that the finished house is dome-shaped.

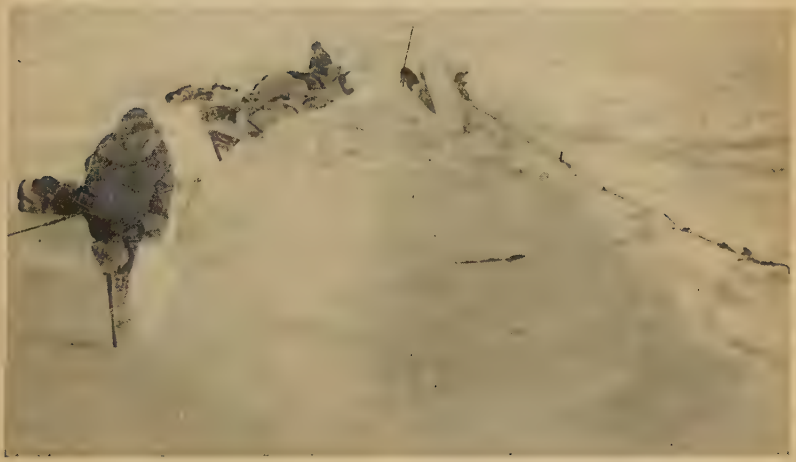
After all the crevices between the blocks have been chinked with soft snow, an entrance tunnel is dug under the wall of the house to open through a door in the floor. Some Eskimos, however, make doors in the side wall, when they wish to save time and do not mind wasting heat.

After the tunnel has been completed, bedding is passed into the house, and a layer of deerskins with the hair down is spread to cover the entire floor, except where the cooking is to be done. Over this layer is spread another with the hair up, in order to prevent the heat inside the house from melting the snow underneath the lower layer of skins, and soaking the bedding.

BUILDING A SNOWHOUSE: (1) CUTTING THE BLOCKS; (2) SETTING THE FIRST BLOCK ON EDGE

(3) THE FIRST TIER PARTLY MADE; (4) THE FIRST TIER COMPLETE

(5) BEGINNING THE SECOND TIER; (6) PLACING THE THIRD TIER



(7) BUILDING THE ROOF; (8) PLACING THE LAST BLOCK

Then a fire is lighted and kept very hot until the inner layer of the roof is wet from thawing and the walls are damp. Thereupon the fire is put out, or a hole is cut in the roof, or both, and the house is allowed to freeze. This glazes it on the inside with a film of ice that gives it far greater strength than before, and also hinders loose snow from powdering down at every touch.

Our explorer enjoyed camping in snowhouses when he traveled in bitter weather. Though to build one takes a longer time than to pitch a tent, the resulting comfort more than pays for the extra trouble. In less than two hours after halting for the night, his party was usually settled at ease in their new home. The dogs outside, each unharnessed, tied in his place, and fed, curled down with their bushy tails over their noses. The men inside, wearing only their under garments, sat in a warm little room and ate a warm, big supper.

After supper, they stayed up as long as they liked and burned all the oil that they wanted. In this respect, they were different from other white men who have journeyed in winter over the ice of the Arctic Ocean. Because the latter were afraid of using up their supplies before they could reach land again, they often went on short rations. Stefansson, on the contrary, believed in keeping warm and eating plenty as long as the fuel and food lasted. Then he took his

rifle and marched out to get some more. In Chapter VII you will read how he did it.

One of his practical theories is that the way to prosper in Eskimo Land is to take a few hints from the Eskimos themselves and imitate their wiser methods of keeping well and gay and comfortable the year around.

When emigrants from the temperate zone travel north to settle in the Arctic, they will have many advantages over the natives. For example, consider the subject of houses. With nothing except driftwood, earth, rocks, whalebones, snow, and the skins of beasts, Eskimos have learned to build the best type of house for their needs. They have chosen to have small spaces inside, easily heated and with good ventilation. They have adopted a sensible style of trapdoor and walls thick enough to help fight the cold.

No doubt, white settlers of the future, with the aid of tools and various materials — glass, bricks, plaster, felt, and so forth — will invent dwellings capable of keeping them contented and comfortable through arctic winters not much colder, though longer, than the winters we are used to in parts of the United States far to the south of the arctic coast.

These pioneers of the future will probably follow the Eskimo fashion of dressing in caribou skins, since there is really nothing else so good for winter wear. They will enjoy eating plenty of fat — and perhaps also

much sugar—foods which supply their bodies with warmth and energy for an active outdoor life in the exhilarating air of the Far North.

During the years that our explorer spent in the Arctic, he grew very fond of fat. The favorite food of his earliest Eskimo friends, near the Mackenzie River, was dried whale meat cut into small pieces and soaked in fermented oil. They always had a pot of oil handy, in which to dip the meat or their fingers at every meal, even breakfast.

Never will Stefansson forget the curious breakfasts that he used to share during his visit in Ovayuak's house. It was an unusually large house with a ground plan like a club in playing cards, its three sleeping-alcoves rounding out from a central space about twelve feet square. At night this space held a small sheet iron stove, little tables, cooking pots, platters, and our explorer, who preferred to sleep on the floor near the door in order to be as cool as possible.

Early in the morning he was often aroused by the snap of a match, as someone woke up to have a smoke. The light from the four ever-burning lamps flickered over rows of black heads, packed side by side along the inner edge of the alcove bed-platforms. Now one and now another man rose on his elbow to talk to somebody across the floor.

By and by, still talking and laughing, a few of the

women sprang up and scrambled into their clothes in less than a minute. Then out they scampered to bring in armfuls of frozen fish. These were dumped on the floor and left to thaw until they were as soft as ice cream. The women then slit the skin along the belly of each fish, took its edge in their teeth, and stripped it somewhat as we peel a banana.

After the fish were put on platters, Ovayuak's wife picked out the best pieces for the children. When breakfast began, a pot of oil and a pail of water were passed around from platform to platform. Pieces of the frozen meat were dipped in oil before being put into the mouth; or else the first and second fingers were dipped in and immediately sucked with a smack. Everybody drank much water, because a meat diet increases thirst. Hand-wipers of bird-skins or freshly cut shavings were used to rub off the oil and other mess. They all took care not to soil their clothes. Eskimos are very careful not to get grease on their clothing. This is not from mere tidiness. If a garment were to become soaked with grease it would become what is called "a good conductor of heat" and would no longer serve to keep them warm out of doors. Stefansson says the idea that Eskimos grease their bodies to keep warm is only a bit of amusing folklore. At least, he has never seen any sign of that alleged practice in eleven years of living with many kinds of Eskimos

from eastern Siberia and western Alaska all the way east to Coronation Gulf.

Many Eskimos keep a new suit in reserve to wear for best. The gentle "savages" were particularly well supplied with clothes. Since they also had plenty to eat and owned any number of houses, they might be called wealthy, especially the wholly uncivilized ones whom Stefansson has called "Copper Eskimos," because so many of their implements are made of that metal. They were also remarkably healthy. Indeed, our explorer has never seen healthier human beings anywhere on all his travels. He has never seen any who were happier. Luckily for them, they had not yet been informed by condescending white visitors that they were poor, miserable wretches in a dark and joyless land of ice.

They believed themselves to be comfortable; they knew themselves to be satisfied. They were satisfied with their food and with their clothes, with their country and its climate. They had no desire to change. They had no idea that any other place or mode of living could be better than their own. In short, they were content.

And that, believe me, is a most comfortable state of mind. It is even better than dwelling in a perfect climate. After all, what is a perfect climate except one with which you are perfectly satisfied?

CHAPTER VI

Three of Stefansson's Friends

CHAPTER VI

Three of Stefansson's Friends

One of our explorer's friends among the Eskimos was Ovayuak, in whose house he stayed as a guest during his first winter in the Far North. Ovayuak was a very fine type of man, indeed—one of the finest to be met anywhere. Everybody trusted him. His own people knew that they could always rely on him for help in time of need. As for Stefansson—an entire stranger, evidently poor and without power to do favors—Ovayuak took the young white man into his house, gave him clothes to wear and food to eat, and treated him as a member of the family. In the preceding chapter I have described a breakfast in Ovayuak's household.

These Mackenzie River Eskimos depended on fish as their chief food the year around. Before the arrival of white traders in the arctic country, the natives used to devote all their time to fishing in late summer, when the fishing was best, in order to store up a supply large enough to last through the winter. After the traders appeared, bringing tea, tobacco, sugar, silks, chewing gum, and so forth, to exchange for furs, many of the Eskimos spent the summers in leisurely journeys to trading posts. While they wasted days in belated

bargaining and unnecessary visiting, Ovayuak traveled rapidly thither and back again to the fishing ground which he had selected for that season.

There he and his kinsfolk toiled industriously, the men shoving out nets at night and hauling them in at

A DAY'S CATCH

morning, the women cleaning the fish to dry upon racks or to be tossed into pens and left to get a gamey flavor before the autumn freeze-up. The family had tons of this food laid up by the time the other heads of households returned from their trading trips. Though the

latter fished steadily, in an effort to make up for the lost weeks, they rarely caught more than half enough to feed them till spring.

Ovayuak was proud of the fact that these people always turned to him when they came to the end of their provisions. They knew that he was more likely than anybody else to have an abundance of fish to give to needy friends. He never even thought of refusing to share with others. It seemed to him that they had as much right to the fish as he had himself. In the old days, before white men came to the Arctic, all Eskimos used to feel in this way with regard to food.

As a rule, such things as dogs, sledges, tents, tools, and the like were owned by the men who had made them or bought them. But fish, when accumulated in a pile, belonged not merely to the man in whose net they had been caught, nor to him and his neighbors, but to any one who came along and needed them. In the Mackenzie district, the custom was that a visitor might feed his dogs and his people with any fish that he might find. But he must not load it on his sled or boat to carry away, unless he got permission from the man who had caught the fish.

You may fancy that such generosity as Ovayuak's would tempt a lazy man to idle away the summer, sure of being fed by his industrious friends. In actual practice, Stefansson has never known this to happen.

Though there are lazy men and shirkers among the natives, they are not so common as among us. The truth is that they are afraid of being despised if they give up working. In Eskimo Land everybody is acquainted with everybody else for hundreds of miles up and down the coast. They are crowded so closely together in their little huts and temporary villages that no one can help caring intensely in regard to what the others think about him. In their small communities, public opinion is far more powerful than in our larger world of few friends and countless strangers. Formerly among all Eskimos, and now among those who dwell far from white men, there is no government except by public opinion. If a man shows himself to be a thief or a trouble-maker of any sort, he is shunned by the others. This makes him so unhappy that as a rule he reforms and tries to behave so that he will win their approval. Now and then, however, one may become violent in his determination to act as he likes, without regard to anybody else. If he grows too dangerous the rest all agree that he ought to be killed. They consider that it is better for one man to die than for the entire community to be kept in misery.

No Eskimo community has a real chief with power to give orders and to punish any disobedience. At times, a man of especially fine character and ability, like Ovayuak, is so much respected that everybody is

eager to please him by doing as he wishes. Because of his influence over his own people, Ovayuak was treated by white men as if he were a regular chieftain, such as other Indians have. Our explorer is proud of being his friend.

One reason why Eskimos can get along peaceably without laws or punishments is their carefulness to avoid ill-natured gossip. They know that nothing can break up a pleasant social group more completely than slander. Though everybody may be aware that a certain person is a liar, they may shrug their shoulders and leave him alone, but they will not complain of him in bitter words, since this might create enmity and spread scandal.

If only civilized folk would copy the kindly Eskimo in this respect, at least!

In other qualities than this, our neighbors of the Far North deserve to be copied. If asked their own opinion, they would declare that they excel white people in every way except in the luck of having plenty of money. Though they tried not to hurt Stefansson's feelings, they often laughed over tales of his countrymen's stumbling around over the ice, as ignorant and helpless as big babies. They believed that some white men could fish pretty well and perhaps shoot ducks or rabbits. But in so far as real hunting was concerned, only Eskimos, they said, were able to make a living at

that, while the foolish and feeble foreigners wandered about, missing good shots, grumbling over the cold and the darkness and the food, or losing their way and blundering off to starve and freeze to death unless rescued by some skilful Eskimo.

When they found out that our explorer could shoot well, having hunted all his life, they changed their minds about him, personally, and admitted that he was able to take care of himself in a good game country, such as theirs, in spite of his being only a white man.

In Stefansson's opinion, Eskimos are very much like other people, neither better nor worse except as influenced by conditions under which they live. Naturally an Eskimo can find his way about in the wilderness more surely than a city dweller or a sailor. For him to recognize a rock that stands a mile from his camp requires no other faculty than that by which you yourself can recognize a street corner near your home. With regard to skill in hunting, that is as necessary to an Eskimo as ability to earn a living is to anybody anywhere. It is his business.

Eskimos are, it is true, a race of excellent hunters. And, of all those whom our explorer knew, his friend Natkusiak was by far the best. During three years he was Stefansson's favorite traveling companion, who could always be depended upon to obey orders. In addition to this very important quality, he proved to

have an even more valuable trait. Among the thousands of natives met in the Far North, he seemed to be the only one endowed with a taste for adventure. The others might spend years on one side of a mountain and never take the trouble to cross to the other side, unless in the hope of finding game. It would never occur to them to do all that climbing merely for the purpose of beholding something new.

NATKUSIAK AND HIS FAVORITE DOG

Even Natkusiak, though usually willing and often eager to visit unfamiliar places, almost refused to follow his leader, when the latter set forth to search for the Eskimos who had never seen a white man. In the next chapter I will tell you more about the first three weeks of this journey and how the native members of the party grumbled and fussed and

worried. Natkusiak himself, though very vigorous, bold, and capable, had taken alarm at certain wild tales about the mysterious folk whom Stefansson wished to discover. They were said to be bloodthirsty savages who had a pleasant little habit of killing all strangers.

You have already heard how these savages proved to be bloodthirsty only in the sense that they made soup of seals' blood and invited their welcome guests to join them in drinking it. Natkusiak and Tannaumirk were so excited and delighted over their escape from being killed at sight that they stayed awake to talk nearly the entire night. In their enthusiasm over the success of their glorious adventure they declared themselves ready to travel even farther away from home.

As for our explorer, he was anxious now to visit neighboring tribes to the north. He planned to find out if there were any truth in the report that some of the people had light beards and eyes the color of his own. He had been told this story four years earlier on his first arrival in the Arctic. And now these newest friends of his insisted that he himself was a grey-eyed Eskimo!

When he finally met those remarkable natives and saw that some of them really did have grey eyes and light brown beards, he and Natkusiak talked for hours about the marvel of it. So far as he knows, no full-

blooded Eskimo has a right to have grey eyes. Their eyes should be as brown and their hair as black as that of the typical Chinaman. Natkusiak kept saying, "These are not Eskimos. They merely dress and talk like Eskimos." And so it seemed to our explorer.

It is possible that these "blond" Eskimos are descendants of Norsemen who settled on the west coast of Greenland a thousand years ago. This colony was visited by ships just before the time of Columbus and appeared to be flourishing. But when the early explorers, John Davis and the rest, sailed north in search of a short passage to India, they found only ruins of churches, graveyards, barns, and fences, with a few fur-clad Eskimos dwelling in skin tents here and there. The Norse settlers had vanished, perhaps slain in battle, or dead of disease, or gone to lands farther west. Nobody knows what happened to them. Stefansson considers it not impossible that some of them may have joined tribes of natives and become the ancestors of the present grey-eyed Eskimos that so fascinated Natkusiak.

The name "Blond Eskimos" was originally coined by some newspaper men who garbled and exaggerated the first reports of these people. Stefansson has said that he found among some seven hundred, less than twenty who were conspicuously lighter in complexion than Chinamen. Nearly all of these twenty lived

near Prince Albert Sound, Victoria Island. He prefers to call the people of this general district the Copper Eskimos because many of their implements are made of native copper, which they pick up here and there on the surface of the ground and hammer and grind, without heating, into whatever shape they desire.

Upon returning "home," after more than a year of absence on this particular trip, the party was greeted with astonished joy by Ilavinirk and his family, the Eskimos whom they had left in charge of their lonely little camp on Langton Bay, a hundred miles east of the nearest settlement. They behaved as if the fat and cheerful travelers had arisen from the dead. In fact, the Eskimo family for many months had been wondering if their vanished friends had really discovered the dreadful folk who "kill all strangers." If so, what had happened?

Upon hearing how delightfully the wanderers had been entertained by these same terrible tribes, the stay-at-homes were almost sorry that they had been afraid to go along. Eight-year-old Noashak, especially, wished that she had been there for the dinners and the dances and the rest of the fun.

Noashak's father, Ilavinirk, and her mother, Mamayauk, were excellent persons, of whom our explorer was personally very fond. He had met them on his first visit to the Far North. On his second visit, a year

MAMAYAUK PERFORMING A CHARM ON A YOUNG PUP SO THAT HE MAY GROW UP TO BE A VERY GOOD DOG

later, he was glad to be able to hire them both, the man to help in hunting, and the woman to do sewing. As for Noashak, though she was of no use whatever, and utterly spoiled into the bargain, she was too young to be left behind with relatives. Therefore she, also, went exploring with Stefansson. He frequently marveled why such a naughty child was never punished.

He knew, indeed, that Eskimos, as a rule, do not punish their children. One explanation is that Eskimos are so fond of their little sons and daughters that they cannot bear to punish them. Stefansson does not agree with this opinion, since, so far as he has been able to observe, these broad-faced wiry-haired kindly folk are no more and no less affectionate than white parents. Another explanation is that Eskimo children are so good that they do not need punishment. Certainly this was not true in regard to naughty Noashak.

During the entire four years that her family stayed with our explorer, she was the undisputed ruler of his party. His plan of work was such that he could not get along without the help of Eskimos. If he had insisted that Noashak must obey orders instead of behaving exactly as she pleased, her parents would have refused to remain in his service. Though at the time he could not understand such foolish indulgence of a spoiled youngster, later he learned the reason why she was always allowed to have her own way.

One occasion on which she seemed to be particularly selfish happened when he was exploring the Horton River. Men and dogs had been several days without anything to eat except seal oil. The dogs, being tired and weak from hunger, had ceased to pull. Stefansson and Ilavinirk were harnessed to the sled on either side, straining their backs to haul it forward, while Mamayauk walked ahead, breaking a trail. Noashak, a fat and sturdy girl of eight, was on top of the heavy load. Whenever the men stopped to rest, she would immediately jump off the sled, run to the river bank, and slide down it again and again. The moment they started, she would jump on the load and ride.

On a day when the grown persons were more tired than usual and growing weaker from long fasting, Stefansson asked Ilavinirk if he did not think it would be a good idea for Noashak to get off and walk a little. (They had, by the way, saved food for her so that she had something to eat, while the rest went hungry.) Ilavinirk talked to her very gently, telling her how tired both he and the white man were getting. He asked if his dear daughter was not willing to walk now and then, so that they could travel faster toward camp where there was plenty of food. But she said that she did not want to walk. He sighed and, shaking his head wearily, struggled on in his harness.

Later when they paused again to rest and Noashak

again scampered gaily off to run uphill and slide down during every minute of the halt, our explorer once more suggested to Ilavinirk that she ought to rest while they rested, and then she might feel like walking when they were ready to start on. Ilavinirk put the case to her as before. Evidently he was as anxious as Stefansson was to have her walk. But her curt decision that she would rather slide downhill settled the matter. She slid. And the men hauled the heavy sled, with that big, fat girl perched on top of the load.

For nearly three years after that, Noashak continued to do as she pleased. She was never forbidden anything; she was never punished. When she was about eleven years old and as tall as her mother, she began to chew tobacco. She used to steal it wherever she could find it. Her elders talked to her about this new bad habit. They told her that white people did not approve of young girls chewing tobacco. She replied that she did not care what they thought. Mamayauk and Ilavinirk were much worried and tried to hide the tobacco so that she would not find it. She took pleasure in hunting it out and then, as if by accident, opening her mouth so wide that no one could help seeing the brown cud inside, staining her teeth. She seemed to be proud that she could outwit and disobey grown persons.

By and by her parents discussed the matter with their white friend, saying that they wanted his advice.

Though he did not say much, they decided that Noashak was now old enough to be punished. (I will explain this in a moment.) The next time that she was caught chewing tobacco, her father talked to her very seriously, urging her to stop such a bad habit. But she only laughed at him. Thereupon he slapped her. Such a thing had never happened to her before in all her life. At first she was speechless with astonishment. Then she burst out crying with rage and kept on weeping all day. Toward night she quieted down, apparently realizing that she was no longer the ruler of the family

NOASHAK

and must learn to obey her elders. Accordingly, she gave up tobacco and returned to chewing gum, of which all Eskimos are extremely fond. (Before white traders brought them American gum, they used to chew dried seal blood or spruce gum.)

Now I will tell you why Noashak's parents allowed her to behave as she pleased for so many years. Eskimos believe that every child is born with such a foolish and feeble little baby soul of his own that he, or she, needs a wise guardian spirit to take care of him. Mamayauk's mother died just before Noashak was born. The soul of the old woman was supposed to wait beside her dead body up on a hill near the village until it was summoned to be the guardian spirit of a new baby. Mamayauk called it by uttering a magic formula twice, according to custom.

"Soul of my mother, come here, come here; be my child's guardian! Soul of my mother, come here, come here; be my child's guardian!"

Hearing the charm, the old woman's soul came fluttering down to enter into the baby and take care of her, keeping her healthy, teaching her to walk straight and to talk clearly, guiding her every act. At least, that is what the Eskimos believed. They seemed to regard Noashak as the wisest person in the family. They listened respectfully to her opinions, for they imagined that she spoke with all the wisdom of her

dead grandmother. They even called her by the old woman's name. In speaking to her own child, Mamayauk never said "Daughter" but always "Mother" — disregarding the body of the child and addressing her guardian spirit only, which was Mamayauk's mother's soul, you must remember.

If Noashak cried for a knife or a pair of scissors, Mamayauk always gave her the desired object. She feared that, if she should refuse, the guardian spirit would be so angry that it would abandon the child. If that happened, the helpless little creature would very likely die or become bow-legged or hump-backed or cross-eyed or something worse, and the parents would be blamed for their cruelty.

Do you understand now why Ilavinirk allowed Noashak to ride on the sled, although Stefansson and he were both nearly worn out and almost starving? He thought that the girl's guardian spirit wished her to ride, and would be deeply offended in case he insisted that the youngster should walk. He felt that she was not yet old enough to take care of herself.

However, as has been said, when she began to chew tobacco, he decided that her own soul had grown strong and wise enough to look after her own self without the aid of the guardian spirit. That was the reason he dared to slap her when she laughed right in his face. He believed that it was now safe to teach his selfish

daughter to obey her parents, even at the risk of angering the grandmother's tired old soul so much that it would go fluttering back to its grave on the hill — or disappear into nothingness. Eskimos do not seem to be very clear as to what becomes of the guardian soul after the growing child's own soul assumes authority.

Noashak improved rapidly after her parents started to train her. She has turned out very well. When last our explorer heard of her, she was married and had a baby of her own, probably spoiled. Perhaps now she can sympathize with Stefansson in the way he used to feel when she ruled his household with her whims and reckless notions. Do you wonder, though, that she looks good-natured in her picture? To be a child in Eskimo Land is about as much fun as anybody can imagine.

Eskimos, young and old, seem to live in an enchanted world filled with spirits of all kinds. They believe that every person has a soul, and so has everything else on earth. A plant, a pebble, a dog, and the bone that he may be gnawing, all have souls. They are all equally immortal; each is capable of leaving its body and moving around independently. Nothing is too wonderful for these simple folk to accept as a fact.

One day, when our explorer was explaining to Eskimos that there were mountains on the moon, they asked him how he knew it. He told them that white

people have telescopes as long as the masts of ships, and that through these instruments they can see the things on the moon's surface.

"But have any white men ever been to the moon?" they inquired.

When he answered, "No," they said that, although they did not have telescopes, they did have men — and truthful men, too — who had been to the moon, walked about there, and then come back to tell what they had seen. So, really, Eskimos knew more about the moon than white men possibly could.

These miraculous flights are usually supposed to take place at the dark of the moon at night in winter. Stefansson had a chance to be present on one occasion. Before the beginning of the performance, the window in the peak of the roof was covered with a thick skin or blanket. On the floor directly under this sat the medicine man, clad in knee breeches. Two or three men took a rope and tied him so firmly that his chin rested between his knees. At the end of the rope they fastened a stone or some other heavy object. All the people took their seats in a circle as far as possible from the medicine man. The lights were put out so that nobody could see anything in the darkness. Nevertheless every one leaned forward, his eyes tightly closed. Behind each child sat an older person, with his hands over the child's eyes.

The moment after the light went out, the medicine man began to chant a magic song.

Presently he spoke in a low, throaty voice, "I do not feel so heavy now as I usually do. Somehow it seems as if I were not sitting very heavily upon the floor. Now I am becoming as light as a feather. Now I am beginning to want to rise like a dry stick in water. Now I am beginning to rise. Now I am going to fly in circles slowly just above the floor. Now I am flying fast. Now I am flying faster."

Then was heard a whizzing noise made by the stone fastened to the loose rope-end. The people thought that the medicine man was flying in circles so rapidly that the rope-end whirled around, ready to strike the head of any one who might dare to open his eyes. Consequently, the louder the whizzing noise the more tightly every eye was squeezed shut, and the more securely parents pressed their hands over the eyes of the children.

While the whizzing sound still continued, the voice of the medicine man was heard to say, "Now I am rising above your heads. Now I am getting near the roof. Now I am about to pass out through the window."

Then the voice grew fainter and fainter till it seemed to die away in the distance.

For half an hour the audience sat in absolute silence, their eyes shut, until the voice was heard returning.

"Now I am coming in through the window. Now I am settling down. Now I am down on the floor. Now you may open your eyes and light the lamps."

The lamps were lighted, and lo! there sat the medicine man exactly where he had been when the lights were put out three-quarters of an hour before.

After he was untied, he related his adventures. He told how he had visited the man in the moon, who had just come back from hunting caribou. He told of feasting on caribou meat while the wife of the man in the moon questioned him about the people of his village. He declared that he had stayed a long time according to the way that time is measured on the moon, which is very different from the way we measure it on earth. He had promised to pay another visit next year.

From such stories of pretended visits, you can understand that Eskimos regard the moon as a place exactly like their own part of the earth, with the same kind of human beings, animals, plants, and climate. On the other hand, when we think of the moon, we consider that it is a dead planet covered with deserts and burnt-out volcanoes. Doubtless we are more nearly right than they, but they are just as sure of the correctness of their views as we are of the correctness of ours.

Similarly, many of us until recently, and some

people even to-day, think of the Arctic as a region almost as barren and desolate as the moon itself. This notion, I repeat again and again, is contrary to fact.

Perhaps in time some of you will be able to visit the northern coast of our continent. Not in a spirit flight like that of the medicine men, or even in a flight of imagination aided by books, but, on an actual journey by land or sea or air, you may behold with your own wide-open eyes Eskimo Land as it really is.

CHAPTER VII

How Our Explorer Lived off the Country

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Have you forgotten how surprised our explorer was at first to find the Far North so remarkably different from what he had expected it to be? He discovered that the winter at its coldest is no colder than in certain places farther south, where children trudge sturdily to school every day. He noticed that the snowfall (except in Greenland) is so light that the grass sticks up through it most of the time. He saw this dry snow tossed about in blizzards. He watched it disappear like magic in the spring. He marveled at the rapid growth of grasses and wild flowers during the short hot summer of ceaseless sunlight. He even found spruce forests extending in places to within twenty or thirty miles of the shores of the Arctic Sea.

He perceived that the climate was healthful and that the country was rich in game, fish, fur-bearing animals, minerals, and probably oil. He beheld a cheerful and kindly people supporting themselves by hunting and fishing. Some of them, it is true, had learned to like tea, tobacco, sugar, and other articles that they bought from traders and whalers. But none of them were actually dependent upon supplies from outside

their own regions. For centuries they had obtained from their land and beloved sea everything necessary for living in comfort.

After Stefansson had observed the Eskimo method of living off the country while moving from place to

HE MARVELED AT THE RAPID GROWTH OF GRASSES AND WILD FLOWERS

place, he resolved to imitate them in this respect. Since he was, to say the least, fully as robust and capable as any native, he expected to manage as well as they did, without lugging along a huge quantity of provisions. In this manner he could travel with a smaller party, at less expense and more rapidly, on his long-planned journey in search of "savages."

Other white men in that vicinity declared, on the contrary, that such a scheme was sheer folly. They argued that civilized persons, when starting on a year's trip in that desolate region, needed to carry with them enough supplies to last twelve months at the minimum. The chief of the mounted police at Herschel Island even threatened to ship our explorer out of Canada, if he insisted upon committing suicide by setting out with a scant store of food.

A law authorizing the police to do this had been passed after the Yukon gold rush of 1898 and 1899. At that time many incompetent white men starved to death because they did not have enough food with them and were unable to get game. This police officer did not know that Stefansson was an expert hunter, both cautious and capable. Therefore the former was, in a way, justified in refusing to furnish matches for the latter's proposed journey. This refusal was intended to force Stefansson to go for matches to Point Barrow, four hundred miles to the west. If he did that, he would be caught by the autumn freeze-up, and kept there, warm and well-fed, with the white traders of northernmost Alaska, through the winter. The police chief was determined to save the life of this apparently reckless young man, in spite of himself.

Though Stefansson was keenly disappointed over the prospect of losing a year's time, he decided to go for

the matches. Theoretically matches are a convenience rather than a necessity, since it is possible to strike sparks from stones, or to start fire with a bow-drill, in primitive Eskimo fashion. This process, of course, takes time, especially on cold mornings. Moreover, while our explorer's one white companion, Dr. Anderson, was entirely willing to get along without matches for a year, the Eskimos of the party believed that they could not be reasonably happy if unable to light their pipes at any moment. All things considered, it seemed best to get matches before starting east.

On later expeditions, Stefansson has, as a rule, allowed the use of tobacco to men remaining on his ships or in winter camps; but he has insisted that his immediate companions on sledge journeys should give up the use of tobacco before leaving the base camp. For he does not want to have on his hands again men who will strike because they want tobacco to chew or matches to light pipes.

Because of this delay and various other hindrances, it was not until April, 1910, two years after leaving New York, that he was able at last to strike out into the unknown country east of the easternmost settlement of semi-civilized Eskimos at Cape Bathurst. Dr. Anderson was not with the party. When the rest of the group started eastward, he had turned to the west. It was his task to make a four-hundred-

mile trip to the nearest Hudson's Bay Company trading post to meet the only mail of the year, in order to get letters and to send out reports that Stefansson's party was alive and well.

Waving farewell to Noashak and her parents, who were afraid to venture in that dangerous direction, away marched the little procession. Old Pannigabluk, chewing gum as usual, trudged ahead to pick out a trail over the rough sea ice along shore. After her plodded the six dogs, strung out in a line and hauling their best, for the luggage was heavy notwithstanding the fact that it included no provisions. Close to the sled walked the two men, Natkusiak and Tannaumirk, steadying the load to prevent it from upsetting too often, and at the same time pulling in harness to help the dogs. As for the leader, he carried a rifle and wore snowshoes, intending to hunt for game inland, as they traveled.

Looking back now and then, he caught diminishing glimpses of the small lonely group near the cluster of tents that they called "home." Very likely he was glad that Noashak was not going with him this time. She was glad, too, as she stood staring after the departing travelers, her black eyes gleaming with excitement in her round face. She believed that never again would she behold them alive. For days she had been listening to blood-curdling tales about the terrible folk who

THE DOGS AND SLED ON SEA ICE

"kill all strangers." Now she was watching her friends stride boldly off into the very land of those ferocious tribes. Perhaps they committed murder at first sight and then ate their visitors raw!

As for the travelers themselves, Stefansson was the only one who really wanted to enter that mysterious country. The others were frightened. Even he, though eager to press forward, could not help feeling a bit shaky. He knew that all sorts of perils might be awaiting them. They might fall ill when far distant from any possible aid. If they failed to find game, they would starve. If they actually encountered the savages whom they sought, the creatures might prove to be fierce wild men, in truth as in reputation, merciless to strangers.

However, in so much as he could reason out the prospect, the chances were that his party would survive. Judging from his experience hitherto, he believed that he could obtain food. He expected to guard well against illness and accident. He hoped that the wild natives, if discovered, would resemble other Eskimos in the friendliness of their disposition and conduct.

In spite of this clear reasoning, he worried somewhat. The grumbling of his companions annoyed him as, day after day, they toiled onward, and the homeward path lengthened behind them. They were sure that the farther they journeyed, the less game they would find.

Though Natkusiak and Tannaumirk killed a fat grizzly bear and two big bearded seals the first time they went hunting, they worried because no caribou had yet been seen.

For five days they grumbled, while old Pannigabluk grunted assent. Then an April blizzard from the east blew snow so thickly into the eyes of the dogs that the sturdy animals refused to face it. They insisted upon curling up to wait for better weather, each with his nose buried in his own shaggy hair. Since the travelers were in no hurry, they halted to camp, pitched their tent, lighted a fire, boiled a huge kettle of bear meat, and cut strips of raw blubber from the two seals that had been slain two days earlier. All four lounged upon the fur bedding and feasted at leisure, for much eating was always a chief pastime when they were delayed by a storm.

But still the Eskimos worried. Even while their mouths were full and their jaws grew weary with munching, they bewailed the white man's folly in pushing on into a perilous unfamiliar country, where they would certainly starve to death. Caribou tracks had been growing steadily fewer and fewer until they had vanished completely. Therefore, they argued, the caribou were all behind them, and none were in front. This meant that starvation was staring them in the face. They reminded our explorer that they had told him

from the first that land toward the east was gameless. They explained with many words that the farther they journeyed from home, the longer would be the road back. They begged him to give up his senseless project and to turn, now, before the flesh shriveled upon everybody's bones and their knees staggered from weakness. In the pauses between their sighs, they consumed more bear meat and blubber.

Realizing that the only way to convince them of the presence of game in that region was for him to go out and shoot some, Stefansson took his rifle and tramped off into the whirling storm. After trudging several miles inland, head bent and shoulders rounded before the furious gale, he caught a glimpse of dark dots faintly visible through veils of drifting snow. They were a band of caribou three hundred yards distant. Though he saw them, they did not see him. Human vision excels that of most animals, and the caribou is dull-sighted. Circling to leeward, the hunter succeeded in shooting three, and hastened triumphantly back to camp with some of the meat.

The astonished grins that greeted him and his burden were not entirely grins of pleasure, for now his companions had no honorable excuse for urging him to return home. Of course, their true reason for dreading to go forward was their fear that they might happen to find the people for whom they were search-

ing. But this they were ashamed to admit, even among themselves.

Instead of retreating, therefore, the reluctant natives journeyed onward at an average rate of fifteen miles a day. While they plodded along the coast, their leader skimmed inland on snowshoes every morning to hunt for caribou as well as to scan the country for signs of possible inhabitants. Every evening he joined the others at supper, for which he provided the meat. Pannigabluk attended to the cooking, and Natkusiak, with the assistance of Tannaumirk, did much more than half the eating. The snapping cold air of April nights in the Far North is undeniably good for appetites.

After nearly a week of such pleasant suppers, unmarred by a grumble, our explorer had an adventure that might easily have resulted in the mysterious disappearance of the chief member of his party.

With his rifle buckled in its case and slung across his back, he was tramping along the sea front of a mountain range a few miles inland. Whenever he reached the top of a commanding hill, he halted to sweep the neighborhood carefully with his binoculars. There was no sign of caribou, though occasionally he spied an arctic fox or a white wolf slinking amid rocks far beyond gunshot.

His glasses were so powerful that he could look out over the sea ice, as well as across the snowy land. By

and by, a dim yellow spot about three miles off shore caught his eye. At first, he was not sure whether it was dirty ice or something else, perhaps a bear. For half an hour he sat there, now gazing intently at the yellow spot, now examining the entire circle of the horizon in search of any dark dot that might prove to be a caribou or a grizzly or a seal wriggling from its hole in the ice.

The sixth time that he swung around to stare again at the puzzling yellow spot, it had disappeared. From that Stefansson knew that it was a polar bear which had waked up and moved behind a cake of ice while he had been scanning the land.

A moment after noting this, he was running as fast as he could toward the vanished bear, for there was no telling how soon the creature would start traveling or how fast he would go. And our explorer needed a juicy steak for supper. So he raced his best, speeding across level stretches, leaping from cake to cake, clambering over hummocks, dodging down little ice valleys, or scrambling to the highest crags to glance back at the mountains on land, in order to make sure that he was going in the right direction.

When he supposed that he had reached the neighborhood of the yellow spot, he climbed an especially lofty ridge and studied the surrounding chaos of crushed and tumbled ice. Not a sign of the bear anywhere! Though

he could not be certain how far he had run, he thought that the beast must be asleep behind a hummock at some place ahead. So he decided to go a quarter of

A BEAR LIKE THE ONE THAT TRIED TO EAT THE EXPLORER

a mile farther and then begin to circle until he found the animal or his tracks.

With his rifle still buckled in its case, our hunter started to clamber slowly and cautiously down the far side of the ridge, head bent and eyes intent upon choosing footholds on the jagged slope. Suddenly he heard behind him a noise like the spitting of a cat or the hiss

of a goose. Instantly whirling around, he saw, about twenty feet away and almost above him, a polar bear.

With greedy eyes gleaming and lips drawn back from long yellow teeth, the brute swung his snaky head from side to side. There was, indeed, no doubting his intentions. The hiss may have been merely his way of saying, "Watch me do it!" Or perhaps he was a chivalrous bear, and desired to play fair by calling, "On guard!" before he rushed to the attack.

In either case, he made a fatal mistake, because no animal on earth can afford to give warning to a man with a gun. In a flash, Stefansson's rifle was out of its case and aimed at the beast's heart. Although our explorer has always been fond of the arctic regions, he had no wish to remain there indefinitely inside a polar bear.

Later, from the trail on the snow, our hunter learned the bear's side of the adventure. Having underestimated the animal's distance from shore, the man had passed to windward of the spot where the bear had lain hidden amid rough ice. Upon catching the scent of a human being, the creature had sniffed his way toward the line of footprints, and then followed it at a space of ten paces to the leeward, evidently smelling the tracks even at that interval across the ice. Stefansson had not once thought of looking back over his own trail, and therefore failed to notice the approaching

danger. He was so in the habit of being chief hunter himself, where bears were concerned, that he never dreamed of suspecting that one of them might take a notion to hunt him.

The story of this curious experience gave our explorer's companions something new to chatter about. When he set out to hunt in the morning, he left them talking. And when he reached camp, eight hours or so later, he heard them still rapidly jabbering, as they fed the dogs, pitched the tent, and gathered driftwood for the fire.

By paying careful attention, he could understand most of what they said, for he had now been studying their language nearly four years. (The Eskimo language is the most difficult of the ten languages that Stefansson has studied and probably has the greatest number of words in common use.) He noticed that they grumbled less over his folly in leading them eastward through this uninhabited country. Though it would have been much more enjoyable to journey westward along a coast dotted with the camps and the traveling parties of their friends, still they decided that this trip was proving fairly comfortable. They had plenty of fresh meat to eat and were earning good wages. As for the dreadful savages, who were supposed to dwell somewhere in this direction, no trace of them had yet been found. Therefore, according to the

A HUNTER AND HIS TEAM NEAR AN OPEN SEALING LEAD

Eskimo habit of expecting the future to be exactly like the past, it was unlikely that any ever would be discovered.

This possibility, as you may guess, was continually in their leader's mind. As the long light days circled past, the sun dipping below the horizon for a shorter time each night, his anxiety increased. More and more frequently, while hunting, he turned his glasses toward the unknown land ahead, in search of some speck or blur that might by any chance turn out to be a sign of human habitation. But always the dark dots proved to be only caribou or seals or rocks blown bare of snow. And the blurry spots were white foxes or grey wolves or dingy polar bears.

Nowhere in all that endless panorama of wintry hills and tumbled sea ice was there the least trace of human beings, except for an occasional glimpse of his own party a few miles distant: a little procession of tiny figures crawling patiently over the rough ice, now hidden by a jagged ridge, now stringing out jerkily across a level stretch, now disappearing beneath the shadow of some cliff along the shore.

So for nineteen days they toiled onward, without discovering a sign of anything that could, by any interpretation, put terror into the hearts of the three Eskimos or joy into that of the white man. And then one evening, while gathering driftwood upon a beach

which our explorer will never forget, they picked up a piece of wood on which were marks of recent choppings with a dull adze. A few days later they discovered the gentle "savages" who have been described in a previous chapter.

On later travels, as on this earliest long journey, the story of living off the country is a story of hunting native game for food and clothing, of burning oil or heather or driftwood or willows for fuel, of camping in tents or snowhouses, of using dogs to haul the sleds in winter or to carry packs in summer.

It may be as well to say here that the members of Stefansson's various parties (not counting naughty little Noashak) always walked. In his entire experience of more than ten thousand miles of sled travel, never, except once or twice when he had chafed or blistered feet, did he sit on a sled, unless it was going down a steep hill. If the dogs can haul a load twenty-five miles a day with you on top, they can haul the load without you thirty or thirty-five miles. No man should engage in arctic exploration who is unable to walk as many miles in a day as his dogs can haul his sled and camp gear.

The Far North is no place for a lazy man. It is no place for a sick man. And it is no place for one who objects to eating food to which he has not been accustomed. But anybody who has an open mind, and is

young enough to enjoy new tastes as well as new sights and novel adventures will be likely to thrive as well as our explorer did during his many years in the "frigid" zone.

On Stefansson's first visit to the Far North (1906-1907) he lived with Eskimos, eating their food, wearing their clothes, studying their language, and trying to think their thoughts. On his second visit (1908-1912), he supported his party by hunting and fishing in Eskimo fashion, while on journeys of exploration over the land. On his third visit (1913-1918) he had the most fascinating experience of all. With two companions, he walked straight north from the north coast of Alaska out over the moving ice of the Arctic Ocean and disappeared in the whirling snow. For more than a year, nearly everybody on shore believed that the daring little band had perished far at sea.

This belief seemed reasonable, because the travelers had carried with them only food enough for thirty days. Since they did not return at the end of that time, common opinion declared that they had starved or else drowned, and in either case were thoroughly dead. Only those few persons who knew Stefansson best believed that he had succeeded in his purpose, namely, to explore an unknown part of the Arctic Ocean, to discover new lands (if there were any to be discovered), and — most important of all — to prove that men can

live by hunting as they journey over the frozen northern sea.

This third aim was important because it meant the solution of the chief remaining difficulty in methods of polar exploration. During several centuries, people have been gradually losing their fear of the polar winter. Earliest voyagers into far northern regions ventured thither only in summer. Later expeditions remained through the winter, though they made no attempt to do exploratory work till the warm summer. About seventy years ago, a few were bold enough to travel by sledge soon after the sun came back. More recently Peary reversed the practice and acted on the rule that the colder the weather the safer and easier is a journey over sea ice.

One big difficulty remained unconquered. That was the question of carrying provisions. In Peary's journey of four hundred miles from Cape Columbia to the North Pole, he used ten tons of food and fuel on the round trip. To manage the hauling of this huge quantity, he had a party of twenty-four men, one hundred and thirty-three dogs, and nineteen sledges. He was absent from his base of supplies fifty-four days.

Stefansson believed that the next step in the development of arctic exploration must be in the direction of proving that men can travel light and fare better by depending upon their rifles to provide food and fuel for

each day. Upon his belief that this could be done, he and his two companions staked their lives.

When the little procession of three men, six dogs, and one sled left the solid land behind them and struck out upon the heaving, grinding floes of the polar pack, they knew that they were considered completely crazy. Many white men had done their best to discourage and to hinder rather than to help. As for the natives, they shook their puzzled heads and jabbered vehemently over the foolishness of foreigners. They declared that nobody had ever heard of such a thing as catching seals a hundred miles away from the coast. Indeed, nobody had ever ventured to hunt more than ten miles from the land in that locality in winter. To attempt to do so was thought to mean sure death.

Even Natkusiak, usually bolder than his kindred, refused to follow Stefansson this time. Upon being offered more pay for a day at sea than for a week of toil on shore, he answered, "What is the use of big pay if I die?"

Since our explorer had no use whatever for timid fellow travelers on this particular trip, he gave up the idea of hiring Eskimos and chose two white men, Storker Storkerson and Ole Andreasen. Both were excellent hunters. Both had cheerful dispositions. Both agreed with their leader that they had good reason for expecting to live by hunting seals and polar bears on

sea ice far from shore in much the same manner as they were accustomed to near land.

Stefansson's belief was that polar waters contain more fish and other marine animals than exist in warmer oceans. Seals, which feed upon such creatures, would naturally seek good eating where it is most abundant. Polar bears, which devour seals, would in all likelihood hunt their prey in every place within reach. Men who can thrive on a diet of fish and seals and bears ought to be able to travel wherever they can find food. Therefore, Stefansson reasoned that he was acting with the most careful judgment in setting forth upon this astonishing journey.

There are many people, including even a few doctors, who suppose that one cannot live on meat alone — and when we speak of meat in this book we always mean both the fat and the lean. But Stefansson had found on his two previous expeditions that he not only could live on meat, but that he enjoyed doing it. On this journey we are now telling about, it turned out that Storkerson and Andreasen liked the meat diet as well as Stefansson did. They all got along famously on it.

Three of their friends escorted the party for the first fifty miles. They turned back at about the most northerly point ever reached by ships in this region in summer. In winter, no human beings of any race had

been nearly so far from the Alaskan coast in that longitude. Our explorer and his two companions were alone at the edge of the unknown.

They knew that they were likely to have any number of adventures, no matter how cautiously they might plan their advance. Nobody can be blamed for an occasional accident while walking in spring over ice that may heave and buckle or yawn in gaping cracks at any hour of the day or night. To be sure, an adventure can be very interesting indeed, especially to the person who does not have it. But these three cool-headed travelers intended to use every means in order to avoid the slightest unnecessary thrill.

Thrills promised to be plenty enough, in all conscience, without being multiplied by any lack of care on their part. For two days after the departure of their friends, no particular peril threatened them. But they were able to progress only a few hundred yards before being stopped by open water. Stefansson killed a seal that stuck its head up through some half-frozen mush produced by the grinding of the floes. By the next morning, this lead[1] had closed so that they could cross it. Marching on for a mile, they were halted by another lead and made camp. They were comfortable in their double tent, because they burned all the

[1] The ice of the Polar Sea is constantly breaking under the stress of winds and currents. The water lanes thus formed are called *leads* (pronounced *leeds*).

STEFANSSON BRINGING IN A SEAL

kerosene necessary for warmth, instead of trying to make it last as long as possible, in the fashion of other explorers. They believed that, when their supply should give out, they would be able to catch a seal and use his fat for fuel.

The following day brought the worst gale that they had ever seen at sea. Although they had built a wind-break of snow so high that only the top of the tent projected above it, the canvas flapped with a noise like cannon shots. A continuous shivering of their floor and an occasional tremendous jar warned them that the ice was breaking up. Though it was six feet thick, it was splitting and piling up in ridges that moved onward, twisting, toppling, and crashing, like a heap of gigantic lumps of sugar pushed slowly across a table by some enormous hand.

Sometimes, during the course of ten minutes, a piece of ice as long as fifty feet rises until it stands perpendicularly. A moment later, it may sway forward and snap near the water line. If such a cake had tumbled upon the tent, its occupants would have been crushed like flies between two boards.

The thought of this peril kept them awake. But greater than the danger of lying quietly in the tent was the danger of trying to do anything. To have gone outside and groped about in the impenetrable darkness, with thick snow filling their eyes, would have been

walking into trouble rather than out. By one o'clock, exhausted from the strain of feeling scared for hours at a stretch, they fell asleep. When they awoke next morning, they saw that one of the pressure ridges had advanced within twenty-five feet of the tent. It was composed of cakes so huge that the fall of any one of them would have closed the careers of the three explorers forever.

After this gale, though the ice had become a chaos of ridges, a spell of cold clear weather of from fifteen to twenty degrees below zero bound the moving floes together, so that the men and dogs were able to travel more rapidly. Every ten miles or so, they came to an open lead, sometimes half a mile wide at the point where they struck it. By following the edge in either direction, they usually found a place narrow enough to be crossed on a bridge. In some cases, the bridge was formed by tongues of ice jutting from opposite sides; in other cases, it consisted of a floating cake wedged in between the bordering floes.

Occasionally, the particular floe over which the party chanced to be walking collided with another vast raft of six-foot-thick ice moving at the rate of twenty feet per minute. Grinding together with a sound like thunder, they piled up a writhing ridge of ice cakes that reared high and toppled forward in a crashing cannonade. Mingled with this uproar was a high-

pitched screeching, as a tongue of ice from one floe scraped over the surface of the other. Meanwhile, the travelers fled over the buckling ice towards the center of their large floe to wait for the pressure to cease. Then clambering over the new ridge, they proceeded on their way. Had they been on a smaller or weaker floe, it might have gone hard with them. Indeed, they had on this journey many narrow escapes from being either crushed or drowned.

As they advanced mile after mile over white fields of ice and across dark strips of gleaming water, they noticed that signs of game were becoming rarer. Though they halted at several leads to watch for seals, they spied not a single sleek head pushing through the ripples. Scars of old breathing-holes appeared fewer. They passed the track of some wandering bear perhaps once a day. And often the tracks were months old. Our explorer began to be anxious.

He wondered if he had been mistaken in expecting to live by hunting while journeying over the sea ice. The Eskimos had warned him that no game could be secured far from land. Geographers and explorers had hitherto believed that the polar ocean in that quarter was without life of any kind. Stefansson himself really knew no more than they did with regard to conditions in the undiscovered spaces of the Farthest North. But he differed with the other authorities

on theory. According to his most careful reasoning, he believed that there ought to be seals all over the polar sea. He might be wrong. He might be right. The thing to do was to keep on going and find out.

So the procession trudged on: three specks of men and six dots of dogs crawling along toward the top of the world. The dogs were enjoying this trip more than usual, because their load grew lighter every day as the supply of provisions decreased. They were fed all that they could eat. Their masters never missed a meal. The more they ate, the lighter grew the load. The lighter the load, the faster the dogs pulled the sled. The faster they traveled, the sooner they would reach the end of the journey.

On they hastened upon ice that floated over an unknown ocean, away from known lands. Although their food supply was getting low, and they had no intention of turning back soon, they stinted neither themselves nor their dogs. In all north polar literature, so far as I have seen it, I have never read of any party which, under the same circumstances, would not have cut down their rations and tightened their belts. But these men were different. They were expert hunters with confidence in their rifles and in their theory that the friendly Arctic would provide food and fuel for resourceful travelers.

After tramping resolutely northward — ever north-

ward — for two hundred miles, our explorer decided to swing around in a great half-circle toward Banks Island, an uninhabited country far to the east. If he had been able to start from land a month earlier, as he had planned, he could have continued to march northward for some time longer. To do this now would have been too dangerous, because the rapidly increasing warmth of the sun was beginning to thaw the ice.

On the second of May the sun shone at midnight for the first time that season. No more than a third of it sank below the horizon before gliding upward again. Thereafter it revolved endlessly around the sky, pouring down heat that warned our travelers to put on more speed. If they should fail to reach Banks Island before the ice broke up, they would be compelled to camp on a drifting floe until the freeze-up in autumn. In their hurry, they dared not snatch even an hour to look for seals in the open leads. Rather than to delay for this purpose, they preferred to live on half rations for a few days. This was the only time in that whole eventful year that the three men rose from a meal not quite satisfied. As for the dogs, they were surprised and pathetically disappointed to receive only half a stomachful apiece each night at the end of their daylong tugging of the lightly laden sled. Most of them, however, seemed to realize that there must be some reason for the apparent cruelty of masters who were usually kind.

During this brief period of reduced fare, the little band passed open lead after open lead, without a glimpse of a seal. Sometimes in the evening, when weary from a hard march, Stefansson wrote in his diary that perhaps the Eskimos and whalers and polar explorers had been right after all in believing that food would prove scarce on the arctic ice. But even in his most anxious moods, he clung stubbornly to his theory that the seals ought to be there, anyhow, whether he found them or not. He remembered how often he had hunted patiently for seals just north of Alaska, watching in vain through tiresome days and weeks, only to have his luck suddenly change some morning and show him a dozen animals swimming around within gunshot. He hoped that the same thing would happen again away out here at sea. Otherwise, the party would starve.

They did not starve. On the evening of May seventh, while his companions were cooking a supper just half the size of their appetites, our explorer sat on top of a high ice hummock and, with his spyglasses, studied the leads in both directions for several miles. At the end of an hour, he saw the dark head of a seal pop up through slush ice about a mile distant. An instant shout brought the other two men tumbling from the tent.

Instead of trying to get this particular seal, the three

travelers hastened rejoicingly to double both their own supper and that of the dogs. Though this liberality left them enough food for less than half a dozen meals of the same amount, they declared that never again would they worry over the danger of starving while out upon the ice of the Arctic Ocean. They knew now that seals really were there within reach. As soon as they could spare the time, they intended to shoot a few. Meanwhile they must hurry if they expected to reach land before the ice melted.

So they hurried. Their joy at the appearance of that most welcome seal faded into anxiety over the warmth of the weather. The snow was soft; the ice was sloppy. Plodding onward, they crossed lead after lead on young eight-inch, rotten ice that bent beneath the sled. Though they needed every minute for pressing forward, they began to need food even more. One day they spent two hours in watching for seals. They saw a few and killed three, but they all sank. About three out of four seals will sink in the Arctic Ocean in summer, although three out of four will float in winter. This difference may be partly because the animals are fatter in winter, but Stefansson has advanced the view that the chief reason is that the salt has frozen out of the sea ice during the winter, and when the thaws and rains start in the spring it is fresh water that runs down off the floes into the

leads. You know a potato will sink in fresh water but float in brine. Stefansson and his companions used to drink the sweetest possible water right from the top of the sea.

During this anxious week when the seals kept sinking, the dogs were fed on several pairs of worn-out skin boots and on two grizzly bear hides, the hair of which had been used for fuel, and some other bedding. Five of them, though much thinner, still hauled their best. The sixth had begun on the very first day of short rations to save his strength. No whipping could make him pull an ounce. He was called Bones because of being usually so fat that his ribs could not be felt. He continued to be fat, but he was never again respected. He was never taken on any other trip where the food supply was uncertain. Bones was a quitter.

By the middle of May, the leads were so numerous and the three men were so hungry that they halted to watch for seals. Within four hours, two appeared in the water near Stefansson and were killed. They sank. After another hour or so of waiting, another rose, and was shot. It floated! That night was festive with the first full meal for more than a week. The next day was spent in resting, for everybody was thoroughly tired.

In the course of that day, all three men became snowblind. Because of the warm weather, they used

a single instead of a double tent. The unceasing sunshine was so bright, even through the cloth, that it injured their eyes before they were aware of the damage. Though they made the tent double at once, and spread canvas over the outside, and put on amber-colored glasses, they were ill for several days.

A FISHERWOMAN WEARING GOGGLES

Snowblindness is a malady likely to attack anybody, no matter what the color of his skin. Indeed, Eskimos are even more susceptible than white men. A first attack gives no immunity against a second, as is the case with smallpox or typhoid. On the contrary, the oftener a person has snowblindness, the more easily he catches it again. The only thing to do is to protect the eyes. White men use colored glasses, amber being the best. Eskimos use wooden goggles that admit only a little light through a narrow slit.

To be "snowblind" does not mean that you are really blind, even temporarily. The attack starts with a little smarting of the eyes, as if smoke were in them. Then come shooting pains, like the most intense earache or toothache. The chief reason you can't see is that your eyes hurt so much you haven't the courage to keep them open. About the only remedy is to stay in the dark. Even bad attacks seldom last more than three days. During the stages of recovery your eyes focus badly and you see double.

When our travelers started on afresh, they saw seals in every lead. Cautious Ole Andreasen wanted to get all within easy reach, so as to be sure of a supply for the future. But Stefansson and Storkerson insisted that it was wisest to speed toward land as rapidly as possible, with the sled no heavier than was absolutely necessary. Their motto was: "Do not let worry over to-morrow's breakfast interfere with your appetite at dinner. The friendly Arctic will provide."

But in spite of its generosity with food, that same ocean began to be stingy in the matter of providing bridges for the crossing of leads. When our explorers found themselves stopped by a broad lead of dimpling ice-free water, they very handily turned their sled into a boat. Before leaving the coast, Stefansson had made preparation for such an emergency as this. First the men spread their water-proofed tarpaulin cover on the

MAKING A BOAT FROM A SLED AND A TARPAULIN

COMPLETING THE SLED-BOAT AND LAUNCHING IT

CROSSING A LEAD IN THE SLED-BOAT AND MAKING A LANDING

ground, then placed the sled on the middle of it, lashed two six-foot-long sticks crosswise at either end, and connected these with one of their skis at each side.

Over this frame they lashed the tarpaulin. And there they had a boat capable of carrying a thousand pounds. They made two trips across the lead, taking each time three of the dogs.

That night, while sleeping in a camp near the lead, the men were awakened by an excited barking and rushed out to learn what had alarmed the dogs. A school of beluga whales, a species of dolphin, were passing along the lead. The young ice, which had formed as the sun slid low in the north at evening, bulged and splintered over their humped backs, as they rose to spout. If the three hunters had possessed a harpoon, they might have captured any number of the graceful creatures, which are very good to eat. No doubt, they could have caught also plenty of fish. On such a journey as the present, however, a journey which had become a race with the weather, they did not care to bother about any game except the ever-useful seal, the best all-around animal of the Far North.

To be sure, the travelers were willing to shoot such polar bears as obligingly walked into camp — and this happened when the party was cast adrift on a moving island of ice four or five miles square and separated from neighboring floes by uncrossable leads of mush ice. From the height of its hummocks above sea level, Stefansson estimated that the floor beneath

them was about fifty feet thick. Therefore it was as safe a camping site as is possible on sea ice. Furthermore, there was plenty to eat.

That first bear that so accommodatingly came sniffing around camp added five or six hundred pounds of meat to the larder. He weighed four times as much as a seal. Ten hours later, another bear spied the dogs strung out along a tie line that was fastened at both ends to chunks of ice. They were all lying down, with their heads raised to look toward their masters who were hunting seals a quarter of a mile away. Storkerson chanced to notice the bear slinking behind a hummock toward the dogs. At sound of his shout, Stefansson, the nearest of the three, whirled about and started at a run toward the tent. While still more than a hundred yards distant, and badly out of breath from plunging through soft snow, he saw the bear round the hummock and half stand up, preparing to make a dash for a dog. Our explorer's bullet struck him two inches back of the heart. He crumpled up, with his four legs under him, his head resting on the ice, his eyes following every movement as the man sprang forward to cut off the brute from the open lead. Just as the explorer pulled the trigger a second time, the dying beast hurled himself straight at his enemy. He collapsed so near that his blood spattered Stefansson's boots.

After this, every few days, a bear walked into camp, apparently mistaking the dogs for seals basking on the ice. In addition to bear meat, an abundance of seal meat and blubber was stored up as provision for the future, in case the little party should be unable to escape from their Robinson Crusoe ice island that season. If they had been obliged to spend the summer there, they would have stayed on close to their store of food and fuel through the darkest part of the following winter, when hunting would be difficult. The problem of making a living no longer bothered them. Whales kept voyaging past in dozens or hundreds, and seals swam about on the surface, feeding lazily on millions of shrimps and other marine animals. There was undeniably plenty of life in this far northern sea. Indeed, they were now so prosperous that they began to worry over

A MEAT CACHE

their wealth. What if polar bears should succeed in robbing their larder next winter? Or suppose that on some night of furious storm the island should split in the middle of the camp, and spill all supplies into the water? If it should happen to spill the dogs and their owners too, that would certainly end their anxieties.

In the circumstances, it is by no means strange that our travelers kept their eyes open for a chance to get away. On the fifth of June, the lead on the east side toward Banks Island became so clear of ice that Stefansson decided to risk a crossing. Four times the sled-boat was loaded and ferried to the nearest floe. Although they carried with them a thousand pounds of meat and blubber, they left behind more than a ton of food. It must have proved a feast for the many gulls that had been fluttering tamely around the tent since early in May.

During the next three weeks, the little band zigzagged slowly toward land. On cloudy days they marched by sea-map. The clouds above a white patch of ice look white and above a dark strip of water they look black. By watching the sky ahead, the travelers could tell in which direction to steer their steps so as to get around the open leads. For this reason they preferred cloudy weather, in spite of the fact that on such days nothing casts a shadow. And without shadows, they could not tell a hill from a hollow on that

uniformly white surface. In moving, they stumbled against bumps and staggered into holes, floundered through drifts of softened snow, or waded through deep slush. For the last twenty miles before reaching land, they plowed through slush-thickened water nearly up to their waists, while the dogs swam, and the sled floated behind like a log of wood.

On the last day, they camped on land-fast ice more than a mile from the green and lovely shore. After their three months on the unsteady floes, they were relieved to set foot upon something safe and solid. No crack could open under them here. No cake could tip on edge to spill them into the water. At last they were able to sleep soundly and to awake without a worry on their minds. They had succeeded. They had proved that men can live by hunting as they journey over the ice of the Arctic Ocean, even hundreds of miles from land.

Though they reached land on June twenty-fifth and found abundant game, it was not until September that they met any human beings. These were some of the men who had given up hope of ever again beholding Stefansson alive. You should have seen how they stared, with their eyes fairly sticking out of their faces. Some were too astounded to utter a word. But one exclaimed: "That can't be Stefansson. The fishes ate him long ago."

Instead of that melancholy fate, as you very well know, our explorer and his companions had eaten the seals that ate the fishes. Instead of starving, they had grown fat. Even their dogs were fat and frisky, and not one had been lost. For five months the party had traveled over sea ice and uninhabited land and had never missed a meal!

Natkusiak was certainly surprised.

CHAPTER VIII

Colonists of To-morrow

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Colonists of To-morrow

If you had been born five hundred years ago or more, no doubt you would have believed that the earth was flat. In case you had lived until Columbus discovered America, you could have learned more about geography than had any of your ancestors clear back through endless ages. But in spite of that, you would have been still an exceedingly ignorant young person. For instance, you would have known nothing whatever about the Far North. If you had thought about it at all, you might merely have wondered, with many other people, whether ships could voyage around the continent in that direction on their way to India. You might have had various ideas about the Arctic, but few of them would have been based on any observed facts.

If you had lived some centuries later, after early explorers had found whales and fur-bearing animals in the Arctic, you might have become a whaler yourself or a trapper or a trader or a missionary. Except for the few men engaged in such pursuits, white people continued to believe that the Far North was too hopelessly cold, dreary, and desolate to be endured by

civilized persons. They considered it waste land not worth bothering about.

Until lately such lack of knowledge has persisted. Perhaps even your parents have been in the habit of regarding Eskimo Land as of no account whatever. You yourself are learning better now from such men as Stefansson. You are learning that the Far North is in reality a marvelous country, rich in a certain type of resources and with a healthful climate. It possesses an abundance of fish, furs, minerals, and grasslands.

Strange though it may seem, the largest grazing areas now available on the entire globe lie north of the tree-line in or near the "frigid" zone. There used to be larger grazing areas farther south, but these are now in part plowed up and are no longer used exclusively or even mainly for stock. More than half these northern prairies are in Europe and Siberia, the rest are in Canada and Alaska. That part of our own continent which borders the Arctic Ocean, together with the islands to the north, contains more than a million square miles of verdure-clad prairie.

On this vast pasture, innumerable bands of caribou have roamed for centuries. In winter, they feed calmly through the storms, their flexible lips nibbling for food, which they can see where the wind has swept the snow away, or shrubs that stick out above the

snow. If they do not find enough in that way, they paw up lichens and mosses from beneath the snow. In summer they wander, feasting, over the so-called "Barren Ground," barren of trees, to be sure, but green with short thick turf and gay with countless flowers.

REINDEER ON THE ARCTIC PRAIRIE

It is curious that anyone should ever have called those prairies "Barren Ground." It must have been because the early travelers in northern Canada came direct from wooded England. If they had been born in western Kansas or in Manitoba, they would never have thought of giving the land such a name. Most

people who know are now beginning to call it instead the "Northern Grasslands" or "Arctic Prairies."

Recently great herds of tame caribou, called reindeer, are bringing wealth to their white and Eskimo owners in Alaska. In years to come — it may be when you yourselves are grown up — the grasslands of the Far North will provide forage for immense herds of these self-supporting animals. From this huge supply, meat will be sent to all the markets of the world.

If you live in a large American city, you can get Alaskan reindeer meat already, by hunting up one of the fine restaurants that specialize in expensive imported foods. Though it is to-day a rare and costly meat, it will soon become more abundant and consequently cheaper, for there are 300,000 reindeer in Alaska now (1925), descended from the 1280 that were brought there from Siberia by our government between 1892 and 1902. The United States Biological Survey estimates that in ten years there should be more than 2,000,000. Some people think that is all northern Alaska will support; others say 4,000,000. Stefansson estimates that northern Canada will support ten times as many as Alaska because the country is so much bigger. Northern Siberia, he thinks, should produce twice as much as Canada. Even half that would be enough to make reindeer one of the chief meats of the world.

In case you should wish to learn more concerning the history of reindeer raising than I have time to tell you, write to the United States Department of Education at Washington. For thirty years that branch of our government has been helping Eskimos

AN ESKIMO RIDING A REINDEER

to change from a purely hunting people into a race of reindeer cowboys, so to speak.

In case you should be interested to hear how white men and Eskimos alike are developing reindeer ranching in Alaska, write to the United States Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture at Washington. They will send you illustrated booklets, either free or at a small cost.

Perhaps many of you who read this book will some day be earning a very good living in the Far North.

Do you remember our imaginary animated cartoon, which described how explorers kept pushing northward

DAISIES ON THE ARCTIC PRAIRIE

for four hundred years from the discovery of America until to-day? I wish that I could add another scene. Instead of showing glimpses from the history of past adventures, this new picture would flash before us as a vision of the future.

Look! Upon the glowing map of America appear tiny human figures, plodding forth from the thronged cities and from the cultivated plains. By twos and

tens and hundreds, they move across the earth, headed northward. Northward they travel past farms and forests, seeking a new country where there is space enough for all, where there are abundant resources for providing food and clothes and shelter, where every industrious person can earn a living and still have leisure for recreation.

Behold! Far north along the shores of the Arctic, a quiver of up-springing settlements fringes the coast. Boats swarm around canning factories, smoke flutters above smelters, herds of reindeer dot the prairies. Motor-drawn sledges glide over the snow. Airplanes whiz across the sky. Submarines dive in swift smooth journeys beneath the polar ice. And here or there, on every street corner, glimmer out the lights of theaters where movies entertain white people through the sunless weeks of the midwinter dancing time, the singing time, the laughing time of Eskimo Land.

This is how I read our explorer's hope for one of the waste places of the earth. Indeed, we can feel sure that it is even more than a hope; for in arctic Alaska and, to a less extent, in arctic Canada, development is already progressing along the lines of his forecast.

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